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How should faith communities influence public life? conference asks

Sabitri Ghosh

KINGSTON, Ont. – The combustible mix of religion and politics sparked some brilliant flashes of insight and some still-burning questions at last month's "Faith and Public Life" conference in Kingston, Ont.

Sponsored by Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) and the Queen's University Theological College, the three-day affair brought together politicians from all four major political parties and more than 300 representatives from diverse faith traditions to "find ways for faith communities to make meaningful contributions to the common good in Canada."

In an era of increased secular-



A panel discussion at the "Faith and Public Life" conference.

ization that has seen more and more churches picking up the slack from government cutbacks, it was

a theme well taken.

The conference opened with a lecture from Martin E. Marty,

Lutheran theologian, longtime editor of *The Christian Century*, and arguably the best-known commentator on religion in America. He offered his outsider's perspective on Canada's "bi-phonic, bi-religious" tradition and how it fostered this country's renowned religious tolerance.

But Marty also expressed ambivalence with the one-size-fits-all notion of "spirituality," and the watering down of religion in Canadian public life. His critique of secular encroachments set the tone for much of the debate that followed.

Sitting on the opening night's panel alongside United Church, Catholic and Sikh representatives, Bruce Clemenger of the Evangelical

Fellowship of Canada (EFC) deplored how the prevailing secularism would prefer to banish religion entirely rather than attempt to honor all faith traditions. He suggested that Canada would be better off being secular than opting for a *secularist* model that would promote a certain sort of "tolerance" and allow only for public demonstrations of faith such as prayer in schools.

Need prophetic voices

The need for people of faith to enunciate a prophetic voice in the political process was a theme eloquently introduced by Dow Marmur, senior rabbi at Holy

See PEOPLE page 2...

Calvin College unveils biotechnology major

A Christian voice critical to a volatile industry, says prof

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Biotechnology is expected to be the number-one applied science of the 21st century. And Calvin College wants to equip its students to be leaders in the field. Last month the college approved a new major in biotechnology. In February 2000 it will offer its first course,

"Introduction to Biotechnology."

The biotechnology industry is relatively young; its birth is often given as October 15, 1980, the day a company named Genentech saw its stock first publicly traded.

Despite its youth, biotechnology has made a significant impact on both the world of science and the world of the average person,

whether he or she knows it or not.

Human insulin is seen as one of the first products of biotechnology. In fact, Genentech developed a method for producing human insulin in genetically altered organisms, often yeast or E coli.

Mass-produced human insulin meant diabetics no longer had to rely on "foreign" insulins such as

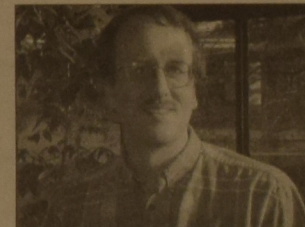
cow or pig insulin. It was biotechnology of a very positive sort.

Such positive developments continue. For example, in the works now is a vaccine-filled banana.

Targeted for use in Third World countries, such a banana may include in its genetic make-up a vaccine against cholera or hepatitis B. Health care workers could then transport the bananas to the people for painless ingestion which, unlike present vaccines, would need no special handling, equipment or refrigeration. Such a biotech development could revolutionize health care in Third World countries.

Unexpected consequences

Other developments in biotech may not be so positive, and have met with resistance. The use of recombinant bovine growth hormone to boost milk production has been approved in the United States, despite opposition, but has not been approved in Europe and Canada.



CALVIN COLLEGE PHOTO

Dr. David Koetje

Genetically modified corn, which is resistant to the European corn borer, may also inadvertently kill monarch caterpillars. Such developments have evoked considerable criticism and media scrutiny. The production of genetically modified pigs with "humanized" organs for transplants has led some critics to accuse the biotech industry of playing God.

And now, into the fray, wades Calvin College. Those involved in the creation of the new biotechnology major at Calvin say the time is right for the college's presence in

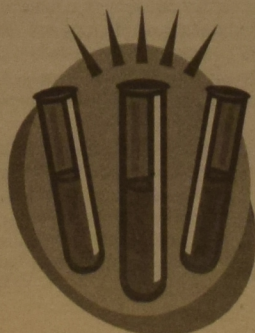
See CALVIN page 2...

THE BIOTECH AGE & OUR FUTURE

Poised at the millennium's edge, we're about to leap into the Biotech Age:

- Will the new biotechnology effect our humanness?
- Who should control the stuff of life?
- Will the future be as bad – or as good – as we think?

Pp. 4, 12-17



News

People of faith need prophetic voice in politics



This woodcut by Jennifer Baltheus was created to express the theme of the conference. "Through the images presented here, I am attempting to connect with a variety of religious voices and their responses to issues of contemporary public life."

... continued from page 1

Blossom Temple in Toronto. Noting that "the prophets had no power, yet they made a lot of noise," Marmur declared that "power not checked by faith becomes uninhibited in its ruthlessness.... But faith that ignores the realities of power becomes naive and self-destructive."

Later that morning, Senator Douglas Roche made a prophetic plea for a social justice agenda in politics. "Those who have been enriched by the past resent the intrusion of a problematic future on the comforts of the present," he said, setting off loud applause. "The present, however, is not sustainable." He urged his audience to answer the call to justice: "We are not prisoners of the past: we are creators of the future."

The no-show Preston Manning left a gaping hole in a panel on

faith's role in politics, moderated agilely by Gerald Vandezande, the now-retired public affairs director for CPJ. Remarking on the importance of honoring commitments, the former public affairs director of Citizens for Public Justice promised those in the audience he'd "have a talk with Preston," words the politicians in the panel seemed to know well.

Avoid twin evils

Shifting effortlessly between his two roles of New Democrat MP and United Church minister, Bill Blaikie expounded on what he sees God's love really meaning in today's public sphere: "God wants to know: did we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit the prisoner, welcome the stranger? God will not ask, did you please the moneylenders, did you successfully impose austerity on already desperate people, did you balance all your budgets, and did you show proper deference to the sacred mystery of the marketplace?"

Blaikie went on to posit that "the market has been elevated from one false god among many in the human political pantheon to the false god of the post-Cold War era."

While critical of "the religious right for its non-prophetic stance towards this false god," he also admonished the left for "advocating a form of market mentality, or consumer choice, when it comes to many personal and social issues."

He concluded: "We must always seek to avoid the twin evils of a faith divorced from politics, or a politics divorced from faith. Only a life in which the two are constantly interacting with each other is a faith which takes God's love for the world seriously."

Be irresistible

The final Wednesday morning panel explored ways in which people of faith can shape the next millennium. Rather than retreat from the mainstream, Christians must make today's pluralistic, secular society an offer it can't refuse, said World Vision president Don Posterski. "If we are Christians, our challenge is to be irresistible: to proclaim the faith and demonstrate the faith, to create such intrigue, that Jesus is perceived to be the preferred choice."

In his provocative summary of the conference, John G. Stackhouse, a theology professor at Regent College in Surrey, B.C., wondered if it were "possible that society, and even Christianity it-



Senator Douglas Roche

self... would be better off if Christians could simply be a major, but non-dominant part of a pluralistic society." At the same time, he said, "to allow secularism to dominate is to be anti-plural and just as dog-

... continued from page 1

the industry. And they have tailored the major so that its graduates will make a difference.

Avoid shortsightedness

"Much of the biotechnology industry is profit driven," says Calvin professor David Koetje, a biotechnology expert who next February will teach Biology 256 (that "Introduction to Biotechnology" course already mentioned).

"That can raise ethical and philosophical questions. And many of the people working in biotechnology have a narrow area of expertise, often molecular biology. They don't have any training in ecology or the humanities. They don't see the big picture. We want to train students who do not have that narrow focus. We want to equip students to address the many ethical, philosophical and social issues that biotechnology raises."

In fact, the biotech major will have as its capstone a course on biotechnology regulations and ethics, a course that will include students writing position papers on thorny ethical issues in biotechnology.

Says Koetje: "We want our students to be leaders and thinkers in the biotech industry." But, he adds, Calvin also wants its biotechnology majors to be proficient, so that upon graduation they are able to secure jobs in the biotech industry.

"If our graduates are to be lead-

ers," he says, "they need first to be hired. And to get hired they need to have the training and the expertise. So, a big part of the major is centred on preparing students with essential laboratory skills for careers in biotechnology."

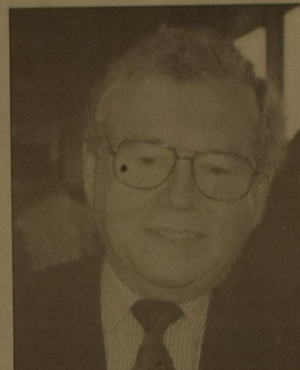
First-class facilities

To that end, Calvin already has set up a state-of-the-art cell culture lab in its brand-new John "Doc" De Vries Hall of Science. That lab has intentionally been equipped to mimic the labs that the biotech industry uses, so that when students leave the Calvin major they can make a seamless transition to industry.

Calvin also recently acquired two DNA sequencing machines, identical to those being used by the well-known Human Genome Project. And the college has grant applications near approval for more high-tech equipment.

Calvin is also committed to giving its students research experience. Internships will be a big part of the new major, as will real-world research projects done in tandem with Calvin professors. And a biotechnology advisory committee, made up of industry leaders, academic investigators and Calvin faculty, will regularly evaluate and update the curriculum to include new biotech trends and advances.

Koetje, a 1985 Calvin graduate who earned a PhD in plant physiology at Purdue University, is excited about his alma mater's entry



Dow Marmur, senior rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto.

common than both being banned from dinner tables in public places.

Sabitri Ghosh is a reporter for the Catholic New Times in Toronto.

Calvin acquires cell culture lab, DNA sequencers

into this brave new world.

"Biotechnology is a very important field," he says. "It's not the savior that some people in the industry claim that it is, but we neglect it at our peril. We need to identify and encourage appropriate uses of biotechnology that balance the needs of producers, consumers and the environment. I can't think of a better place to do that sort of work than at Calvin. To have a Christian voice in the technology is going to be critical."

Koetje, who came to Calvin from the State University of New York at Fredonia, already is adding his Christian voice to the discussions of the public square. In August he was a presenter at the Second International Molecular Farming Conference in London, Ontario.

Christian farmers to address issue

In early December Koetje will give the keynote address at a conference of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) at the University of Guelph. The Christian Farmers Federation has given cautious approval to the use of biotechnology in agriculture, along with mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods, a decision that has aroused the ire of other farming groups in the province.

Koetje expects that the upcoming conference will attract heavy interest, including significant media attention.

News/Politics

Christian teachers' gathering looks back 45 years, ahead to the next century

Marian Van Til

TORONTO — The annual convention of Ontario Christian School Teachers Association (OCSTA) brings together teachers from all over Ontario for professional development, inspiration and fellowship. But this year there was more. During the October 28-29 gathering at Toronto's Constellation Hotel, the teachers "reflected on 45 years of God's blessings on Christian schools" in Ontario, says OCSTA board member and teacher George Cook.

The teachers also looked ahead, says Cook, "rejoicing at the hope and promise for Christian education as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century." They took up the theme "Shine Like Stars," a reference from Philippians 2:15; "Shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life." This was reflected in the daily devotions, keynote addresses and even workshops in which participants were challenged to "shine like stars" in their calling as teachers.

An inspirational address was

presented by Rev. John Suk, editor of *The Banner*, the biweekly publication of the Christian Reformed Church. The main professional address came from Dr. Doug Blomberg, academic dean of the National Institute for Christian Education in Australia, and currently senior member in philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

Consistently high quality

The convention drew 800 teachers from nearly 80 schools.

The majority of those schools are members of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools. However, observers have noted that the consistently high quality of OCSTA conventions attracts teachers from other professional associations in Ontario, as well as some from other provinces, and states of the U.S.

The main convention feature is always the workshops. This year, reports George Cook, there were 30 offered, on topics "ranging from classroom management, to model

building, to jazz, to philosophy." In free time, teachers could browse an exhibitors' hall which allowed 70 curriculum and book publishers, software companies, school support-service providers, and sports equipment vendors to display their wares.

OCSTA is a professional organization which provides teachers with services relating to professional development, certification, contracts, benefits, and communication with other professional organizations.

The human heart, too, abhors a vacuum

Ten years ago this month the infamous Berlin Wall was opened — the most dramatic event in a season that would see communism swept away in virtually all of Eastern Europe. Two years later the Soviet Union itself would disappear, to be replaced by 15 successor states with varying degrees of stability and chances of long-term viability.

It is evident in retrospect that the Marxist-Leninist faith had died in the hearts of most people in the region many years earlier. But much as physics tells us that nature abhors a vacuum, so does the spirit. A failed dogma is never replaced by nothing; it is always supplanted by another creed boasting a sufficiently persuasive claim both to interpret and to change the world.

There was much rejoicing as the Wall came down, based in a deeply felt hope for a future free of the inhumanity of communist misrule. Yet as one idol has fallen, it has been replaced by several others, bringing their own attendant miseries to the region's people.

A new god

First, there was an expectation among many that *democracy* would usher in better times. Yet democracy at its best is not a blind faith in the will of the people. It is, rather, merely a form of government permitting a high degree of citizens' participation and limited by the rule of law.

Furthermore, a successful constitutional democracy generally requires a certain level of supportive representative traditions, which are mostly lacking in the post-Soviet region.

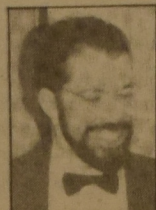
At the outset, virtually all of the former communist countries aspired to be democratic. Yet Belarus's president, Aleksandr Lukashenka, employed a democratic referendum to acquire autocratic powers. Clearly, following the popular will is not a panacea for the numerous ills besetting these countries.

A replacement

Second, if many post-communist citizens had exaggerated expectations of democracy, many more saw it as a means for reaching the larger goal



Principalities & Powers



David T. Koyzis

of prosperity. After the Wall was opened, East Berliners streamed through to see, not *Das Rathaus* (City Hall) of West Berlin, with its democratically elected membership, but the glitzy Kurfürstendamm, its principal shopping arcade, lined with stores offering items unavailable in the East. Of course, prosperity has eluded many, if not most, of these countries, giving rise to a widespread sense of disillusionment with their post-communist governments.

And another

Third and finally, as the old gods have died, many people have sought a substitute in the idol of *nation*. Indeed, nationalism is arguably more powerful at present than what might be called democratism and consumerism.

This is what is fueling the ongoing war between Russia and its break-away republic of Chechnya. It has produced a decade-long conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. And it has led to at least three civil wars in Georgia, two in Moldova and three in the former Yugoslavia.

The Alternative

Fortunately, we are told of a rising interest in Christianity among the youth of at least some of these countries, especially Russia and Ukraine, where the Christian faith was either ruthlessly suppressed or cynically co-opted during the Soviet era. Yet most know little of the substance of that faith, seeing it as one more manifestation of a national tradition lost or ignored by their former rulers.

Let us pray that, a decade after communism's demise, those disenchanted with the old gods may seek salvation, not in democracy, prosperity or nation, but in Jesus Christ, the true source of life.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.

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Editorial

New and improved?

Theodore Plantinga

Where do you stand on the question of biotechnology? A philosopher once wrote: "What kind of philosophy one chooses depends on what kind of person one is." He seemed to think that your philosophy has to "fit" you, like a suit of clothes. Could the same be said of your opinion of biotechnology?

You've probably heard that there are two kinds of people.... Of course there are many ways to finish this sentence, many divisions of our race into "two kinds" of people. You might even be tired of hearing about "two kinds of people." I once heard it said that there are two kinds of people: those who think there really are two kinds of people, and those who don't.

One division into types that I find meaningful is abstainers versus "joiner-inners." I'm an abstainer by nature. On the food front I abstain not just from genetically modified food (if I can help it) but also from meat, milk, coffee and alcoholic beverages. I have never smoked, and I stay as far away from drugs as I can – even the kind the doctor prescribes.

Now I recognize that many of my Christian

brothers and sisters are "joiner-inners" by nature. Some are eager to transform society. They like to try things out. Their lifestyle is not mine. It is understandable that they are inclined to be open-minded toward the idea of genetically engineered food. They probably would not sign a petition against it. I respect their stand. Yet I am not willing to explain our disagreement as nothing more than a matter of inclination or temperament. The fundamental choice we make on such a matter as biotechnology should be undergirded by thoughtful reflection. And if we have not done the needed thinking ourselves, perhaps we can appeal to others who have.

Good for what?

I don't claim that one could begin with premises that all thinking Christians would accept, and then deduce that all biotechnology, including the production of genetically modified food, is unacceptable. Neither do I maintain that the issue can be settled by pulling proof-texts from the Bible. Therefore, if I have reasonable grounds for my great reluctance in this area, I will have to offer some indirect or roundabout reasoning.

So: to believe in creation – as all Reformed folk surely do – is to celebrate an original fullness and adequacy that was present in our world right at the outset. This world, after all, is God's *good* creation. The Bible makes a point of it: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

"Good for what?" you might ask. The answer, at least in part, comes two verses earlier: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food." The original creation was good for food, among other things.

A different goodness

I would like to take our Lord at his word and look to nature to provide us with food, and even medicines. As much as possible, I would like to be nourished and healed through natural materials, as opposed to artificial and synthetic substances. And I would like to look to creation as my prime source of health-giving materials. Thus, I am a familiar figure in the local health-food stores.

Many of those who do not believe in creation believe instead in evolution. Part of the evolutionist creed is the conviction that the history of our race is a story of steady progress. There is no thought that at some very, very early initiation point, our world was "very good," and that we need somehow to get back to that original goodness. A believer in evolution maintains that the process of evolution may proceed ever so slowly, but it definitely brings progress and enhanced goodness into our lives. We have come a long way, and more progress lies ahead for us.

Confidently we await the "new-and-improved" version – even new-and-improved humankind.

A principled 'NO'

May we take a hand in bringing the new-and-improved version into existence? May we help nature and evolution along? The defenders of biotechnology answer this question with a confident YES. My advice is a principled NO. I say *principled* because my sentiment is based on general ideas and may need to leave room for some exceptions.

When it comes to maintaining health, I choose to rely on my own body's resources as much as possible. I believe that God has endowed the human body with a host of ways to maintain its health and vitality. I choose to draw on these God-given resources (part of creation), rather than on human-made drugs and treatments. But this is not to say that I would *never* resort to something artificial to maintain my health, or that I never have done so. There is a place for "artificial" aids to health, especially when we are ill and are struggling to get back on our feet, so to speak.

On the other hand, I do believe there comes a point – however hard it may be to define – when life that is being artificially sustained *should no longer be continued*. Therefore, like many other people, I have a living will in which I have stated my general thinking on this matter as it may apply to me someday after a severe accident or illness.

Likewise, if it one day proves possible to clone human beings, I will not volunteer myself for such artificial reproduction. Rather, I believe that the God-ordained method of reproduction, in which the child receives a genetic inheritance drawn from his or her natural father and mother, should be continued. I wouldn't even want a new-and-improved version of myself produced through a combination of cloning and genetic engineering.

Fresh possibilities

My dream for an ideal bio-future would involve, instead, a reintegration of the spiritual and the physical in such a way that sanctification and good physical health are reintegrated. In that case, progress in the one area would open up fresh possibilities in the other. Could we call it bio-spirituality?

To get to where we hope to go, we may need to make what looks like a detour. In other words, we may have to return to the point where we originally went wrong. The road to redemption runs through creation. A "new-and-improved" creation? It's beyond the reach of humankind. But our Lord will accomplish it in his time.

Dr. Theodore Plantinga is professor of philosophy at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.

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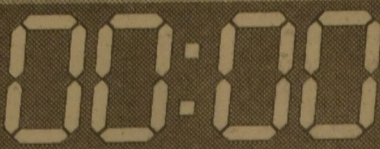
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Sports/Letters

After the Buzzer



Tim Antonides

Death, be not proud

This is usually a happy time of year in sports. Hockey is in full swing, pro basketball is getting started, college football is steaming ahead, and baseball has crowned a new champion. But there's not much happiness this time around.

Death has visited the sports world with a fury, conjuring up many painful stories and images. The hairs on the back of my neck stand up thinking about Payne Stewart and his companions unconscious in a plane that eventually slams into a South Dakota field. The image of Greg Moore's car being pulverized when slamming into a wall is not an easy one to watch.

There have been other less "spectacular" deaths as well. Wilt Chamberlain, the L.A. Lakers star, died on October 12 of a heart attack. Walter Payton, the great Chicago Bears rusher, died on November 1. The death that struck me the most, though, was that of Paul O'Neill's dad.

Who? If you're a baseball fan, or only just watched the World Series, you know that Paul O'Neill is the right fielder for the New York Yankees. And then you probably know that he played on the day his father died. Fifteen hours after his dad, Chick O'Neill, passed away after long suffering from heart disease, Paul took to the field for Game 4 of the World Series. He felt that he owed it to his father to play. "He was the one who taught me how to play," O'Neill said after the game. "I was going to play this game.... The only thing he [his dad] had to stay awake for is these games.... This is what he wanted to stay awake for and watch."

When the Yankees won the series it seemed evident that most of Paul's tears were for his dad. Sometimes we come across stories like this of courage, love, and honor in sports. They're not common, but they do happen.

Taking our minds off trauma

Yet times like these make it so obvious that our world is entrenched in a kind of humanism. Sports writers, athletes and fans look to the accomplishments and successes of athletes in order to temper the stories of the deaths of those athletes, and to "immortalize" their memory. By focusing on their achievements we can say that they lived exceptional lives and were indeed "great." This somehow takes fans' minds temporarily off the fact that everyone, regardless of position, dies, and there's nothing we human beings can do to avoid it.

David Stern, the commissioner of the National Basketball Association, said this about the death of Wilt Chamberlain: "We've lost a giant of a man in every sense of the word. The shadow of accomplishment he cast over our game is unlikely ever to be matched." Again, the description of excellence was used to give an athlete a measure of infinite greatness.

At the Tour Championship in Houston a few weeks ago, many professional golfers said their hearts weren't into playing the game after the death of Payne Stewart. But the event wasn't canceled. The players knew that Payne "would have wanted them to play." A stirring ceremony was held in Houston in which a bagpiper marched eerily through the fog and across the fairway. Payne's greatness on the course was remembered that day and honored the next week when the Tour Championship was held as planned. Payne's legacy lives on.

A true legacy

This is beautiful, compelling stuff, but there's something missing - an emptiness that no amount of human tribute can fill. Those who live in the promise of Christ's Kingdom don't need to worry about their personal stats. Jesus Christ suffered and died for us, and in the end he will rule with perfect justice and unfathomable love. Compared to that, all the statistics, records and trophies in the universe are a joke. They'll wither and die in his presence. That's greatness! And it's also what makes our own deaths meaningful and our "legacies live on."

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 and is a coach at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

How should CC change?

CC is 55 years old, and [my wife and I] have been married that long, too. We've seen some change, most of those years reading CC, and noticing that those letters (CC) now have a different meaning than when our paper started.

Of course its readers changed too, although I believe the core of CC readers are at heart Calvinist, who would like CC to again become a "Calvinist contact" discussion and guidance paper.

Reader's Digest does a good enough job of interesting stories published elsewhere and without a reporter's own view about the matter reported. Being another courier about

what others think or wrote is becoming more and more useless to us; e-vil mail will take care of that.

We agree that CC must change to at least remain viable to its readers [but] not so much by wanting to be popular to all shades of Christianity [since] each one of them [is] quite capable of proclaiming its philosophy and historic baggage.

I still believe there is a great need to again become a meaningful Calvinistic paper, revisiting and renewing Calvinistic thought for the next century. It's somewhat confusing to read your "Dear Reader" letter referring to Reformed this and Reformed that. That particular word is but a modern secular expression of nothing, as [former Czech] President Havel said. Politicians use all these kinds of terms to confuse people.

Let your readers know what you want to reform into. If it means going back to a Calvinist Contact, with more Calvinist writers helping to guide your readers in this confused and evil world and wanting to have a purpose other than just existing for a few more years, then, well, here is our contribution.

May the Lord bless you all.

D. Brinkman
Meadow Creek, B.C.

Where can we get that book?

In CC of Nov. 1, on page 9, columnist Dr. Al Wolters quotes from a book by Mirth Vos called *Letters to Myself on Dying*. Besides myself, I know several older people who might be interested in this book, and it would be an idea for a present. Could you give us an address or a place where we could get this book, and maybe tell us what the price might be?

Thanks.

John Vandermeer
Limehouse, Ontario

This 160-page book was published in late August by Baker Book House in Grand Rapids, Michigan (ISBN 0-9010-1189-2) and costs \$12.99 (US). It should be available at your local bookstore, Christian bookstore, or can be ordered via the Internet from Amazon.com or through Christian Book Distributors (www.christianbook.com).

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Campus

Church growing fast, but at horrible cost: Paul Marshall

FORT WORTH, Tex. (EP) — The church is expanding faster than ever in history, but it is not without a "horrible" cost, says Paul Marshall. The British-born Marshall is senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom and author of *Their Blood Cries Out*, which examines religious persecution around the world. He was formerly the senior member in political theory at Toronto's Institute for Christian Studies, and a *Christian Courier* columnist.

"We are living in the greatest age of the expansion of the church ever," Marshall recently told a town hall meeting on the persecuted church, held at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He cited the growth of the church in China to an estimated 50 million in 1999 from one million in 1980.

Unprecedented

"There is nothing in the book of Acts that shows church growth on this scale," Marshall said. "There's nothing I know of in the history of the church in any country at any time which has church growth at this scale."

The growth, he said, is not coming in Western Europe or the United States, but in places outside the West. "Africa will soon be the continent, if not already, with the greatest number of Christians," Marshall said.

"Christians in the world are more likely to be Chinese or Nigerian or Sudanese than to be Westerners," he continued, adding that about 80 per cent of the church lives outside the West. "If the church diminishes in the West, in terms of the Kingdom of God, that would be a sad, but a small thing."

Marshall says the cost of this growth has been persecution of the church. "These are evil, unjust things that should be fought," he said. "But what is the other side? What is the good news of which this is the dark side? The good news is the spread of the Gospel, the growth of the church, the power of the gospel in people's lives."

Ongoing atrocities

Marshall reported several incidents that have occurred since the middle of September:

- * The senior Roman Catholic bishop in China, who has spent 15 years in prison and has been repeatedly tortured, has disappeared, last seen with Chinese government security officials.

- * A prominent national leader in the unregistered Protestant house church movement in China

was executed on October 14 by firing squad, the second leader of this movement to be executed in the past two months.

- * Chechen militants have kidnapped a young Baptist deacon and are demanding that his church sell its building and use the money to pay the ransom. The deacons' predecessors have been kidnapped and beheaded.

- * In India, a 26-year-old Catholic nun was mocked and then raped for her faith.

- * The Myanmar military government attacked 22 villages of a tribe who are mostly Christians. Witnesses said the military beat and stabbed many people to death.

- * A Coptic Orthodox priest in Egypt was shot. A Coptic bishop faces from eight years in prison to the death penalty on charges resulting from his reporting that 1,200 members of his diocese had been tortured in August and September.

- * In Vietnam, Sept. 17, security police raided a house church, arresting and interrogating an evangelist and two others.

- * In a largely Christian Sudanese province, 700 people die from starvation each day. 50,000 mostly Christian children have been sold into slavery for "the going rate" of \$50.

It's happening right now

"We are talking about things that are recent — not 2,000 years ago, not 200 years ago, not even 20 years ago or last year," Marshall said. "In these particular cases, not even two months ago. This is the situation that we live in now."

Some 200 million Christians are exposed to persecution in about 60 or 70 countries, he continued. And the persecution is worsening in countries like China, Vietnam and North Korea, which Marshall says is "perhaps the worst situation for Christians in the world."

Marshall also listed Islamic countries where Muslims who become Christians face the death penalty, including Sudan, Mauritania, Iran and Iraq. In other countries, he added, the threat comes from family members who have been shamed by the conversion.

"Often you are much more in danger from an uncle than you are from somebody else in many Islamic countries," he said. It is illegal to be a Christian in Saudi Arabia, he continued, and in Pakistan, people use blasphemy laws against Christians.

'Strangle the baby'

In countries such as India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and

The Jesus I never knew

John 14:6 says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." I never realized until now how many different ways this verse could be interpreted.

One interpretation was part of a Christmas reflection from the president of the university at which I'm a chaplain. In it he mentioned that Christmas not only marked the changing of seasons but also the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, he said, was the one who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." This means, he went on to explain, that Jesus' way of acceptance, tolerance, and openness is the way, the truth and the life.

Another interpretation was given me last week when I had a conversation with a philosophy professor who also happens to be a Unitarian. In the course of our conversation he mentioned the very same verse.

"The key to that verse," he explained to me, "is knowing who the 'I' is." He interprets the "I" to be not Jesus the person, but Christ the Divine Logos that existed before, through and after the life of Jesus. So the text doesn't mean that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, but that God, as he has manifested himself through the ages in different forms, is the way, the truth, and the life.

Avoiding the Scandal

Both of these interpretations of this verse avoid what has been called "the scandal of particularity" — the proclamation of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ for salvation. They assume a pluralistic worldview — that there are many ways to salvation. Ironically, such a view, in an attempt to be radically inclusive, becomes exclusive, as it negates (or co-opts) the worldview of all those who disagree.

For example, those of us who hold the traditional interpretation of this verse — that God revealed himself in particularity but offers himself

universally through the church — are left out.

We live in a Culture of Interpretation, some have said. A statement that seems to be an exclusive remark to one person can be interpreted as the epitome of inclusiveness to another. "It all depends on your point of view," we might be told. On the campus, or "multiversity" as some call it, we need to respect the views of others if we want to have our view respected, too. We are one among many.

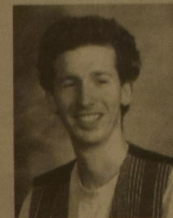
Proclaiming our hope

As a community of Christians on campus we keep sharing the hope we have in Jesus, the Christ. I sometimes debate with those who think differently, and I try to do so in an honest, gentle way. Arrogance and bravado defame the One we serve. I regret to say that some of my formal dialogues with the Muslims on campus have escalated to shouting and ridicule on both sides, as passions inflame when points of conflict are raised.

There is, however, one thing much more serious in my mind than these heated exchanges. It is the care-less attitude that responds by saying, "What does it all matter, anyway?" Convictionless indifference is as pernicious as loveless antagonism.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Campus Culture



Peter Schuurman

Bhutan, "increasingly aggressive" Hindu and Buddhist groups persecute Christians.

The reasons for persecution are political and theological. "In the modern age, when the church grows, democracy grows. When the church grows, human rights grow. This is simply an empirical fact," he said, citing a 1997 report by Freedom House. In that report, 79 of 86 democratic countries were "culturally Christian."

High impact

"The Christian faith affects the way we live and it affects the way societies go and that worries them," Marshall said. He quoted two Chinese newspapers and Chinese police documents that write about the importance of squashing the churches and cite the collapse of the Soviet Union as a consequence of Christianity. "If China does not want these things repeated in its own land, we must strangle the baby while it is still in the manger," a Beijing newspaper said.

"Tyrants cannot have another

king of any kind, whatsoever," Marshall said. "Another king means another loyalty. You have a loyalty to something more than them.... That's why the church is repressed. The fear is real, because [Christianity] will open up a society."

In a *Far East Economic Review* cover story on China titled "God is Back," a Beijing government official is quoted as saying, "If God had the face of a 70-year-old man, we would not care if he were back. But he has the face of millions of 20-year-olds and, therefore, we are worried."

Five ways to get involved

Marshall listed five ways that churches in North America can be more involved in helping the persecuted church.

1. Be informed and pray constantly. Marshall said the Internet can keep people informed of the world situation. He also said, "No church should ever meet for congregational worship without praying for the persecuted church."

2. Make contacts within the per-

secuted church. "We can go there.... We can know them and they will change our lives."

3. Publicize the plight of the persecuted church. He commended Michael Horowitz and Abe Rosenthal, who are Jews and have "done more than any Christian" to draw attention to the problem.

4. Pressure your country's government to take action. Last fall, for example, the U.S. Senate passed the International Religious Freedom Act with a 98-0 vote.

5. Include the entire church, everywhere in the world, in your definition of the Body of Christ.

"When we use the term 'church,' what's the image that comes to our mind?" Marshall asked. "The first response should be: 'I am a member of these people we've talked about in Vietnam, or Ethiopia, or Nigeria or Romania.' God has made us one with one another. As one Body, we share the same joys and the same sufferings."

Arts/Media

The Pokemon cometh

Marian Van Til

If you have children between ages four and 12, you probably know what *Pokemon* is; or are — there seems to be some ambiguity about whether or when the word is singular or plural (which of course drives editors and writers nuts).

If you don't know about *Pokemon*, I have no fear that your life will continue to unfold as it should. Until about a week ago, I was grossly ignorant on the subject, not realizing that these creatures, in their various guises, are the hottest kid craze going.

Just so you know what I'm talking about: they're physically colorful, if psychically/socially one-dimensional, non-human creatures who started out life in Japan as part of a role-playing Nintendo Game Boy cartridge. They're animals of sorts who become pets/gladators for their child "trainers" — the kids who get their parents to fork over the loot for these things.

Some *Pokemon*(s) are "the good guys," some are bad. (Is anybody else troubled by the notion of "pets" and "gladiators" fused together into one creature; or by the use of "gladiators" at all as the prominent feature in a child's toy?)

Pokemon come in many shapes, colors, sizes, with names like Mewtwo (as in Mew the 2nd), Squirtle, Psiduck, which correspond to their physical look.

There are now nigh on to a couple of hundred of them. After their initial life with Nintendo, they graduated to television, and then to trading cards, and they are currently bopping and fighting all over the giant screen.

Having been enlightened by a

newspaper review and story about the first *Pokemon* movie that has, at this writing, just hit theatres in North America (more movies are intended, assuming the craze doesn't crash first), I conducted a web search to see what more I could find out about these "pocket monsters" (the meaning of the Japanese cum English word).

Little did I realize! Upon typing "Pokemon" into my AOL search engine, up sprang the first 10-entry page on the subject. There were only 42,213 entries to go!

I was astounded. Hundreds of kids (and I suspect not a few adults besides) seemed to have their own personal *pokemon*-related web-sites. After perusing dozens of entries, I finally got to one which seemed as if it might answer my still burning question: "What is *Pokemon*?" But then, again, maybe not (www.matsuda.com/jun/pokemon/what.html).

'It takes charge of us'

Obviously written by a native Japanese speaker (of indeterminate age), he or she informed me:

Pokemon (called "Pocket Monsters" in Japan) is a game for Game Boy that is made by Nintendo. Most Japanese children play *Pokemon* and they carry 151 *PokeMons*, and they are brought up. [I believe that means the children "bring up, i.e. "raise" the *Pokemon*(s); who's raising the children, I've begun to wonder.]

*It goes to the various towns and the wood, and a *PokeMon* is made to fight, and collected, and raised, and we complete a *PokeMon* illustrated book as a sweat shirt of the *PokeMon*.*

*We can fight against the friend's *PokeMon* by using the telecommunication cable, and we can be exchanged, and it takes charge of us, and we can be brought up.*

*The animate (sic) cartoon of the *PokeMon* began on television in Japan in April in 1997. It begins in America in September 1998.*

*Now we can't go anywhere in Japan without running into *PokeMon*. The craze over *PokeMon* has spread from the *PokeMon* Game Boy games to toys, clothing, cartoons and even snack food.*

42,200 to go

Not as well-informed by that entry as I was hoping to be, I forged on. I browsed the titles of the first 100 matches in my *Pokemon* search.

One website welcomed me to the "Universal *Pokemon* Network"; another offered the "wisdom" of *Pokemon*; one presumably young webmaster beckoned searchers to his "awesome *Pokemon* site" and begged them to join his *Pokemon* club. There's a *Pokemon* "stadium"; there are numerous "centers" and "centres," and a few "studios."

There are *Pokemon* stores, T-shirts and sites which lead you to other sites. There is *Pokemon* "outrage," which I gathered is less "outrageous" than one might think. And for a really obnoxious twisting of values: "The *Pokemon* Christmas Place," billed as "the best and last of this century — right here, right now."

There is a *Pokemon* "trainers page," and "trainer's station" and, apparently even better, a "master's society." I'm having a hard time imagining what those 42,100 or so other *Pokemon*-related web-sites might contain.

Everyone on earth is waiting...

This is one of those modern trends among kids that perplexes me. But then, *Pokemon* was devised by marketers — obviously very, very effective marketers — a sort of being I don't always understand, I admit (our own excluded, of course!).

But in more ways than one, there's something of the religious in this trend, as there has been in other marketing-trends-turned-social-crazes for kids in the last few years. Did you know, for example, that "everyone ... on planet earth, is waiting anxiously for the forthcoming release of the new *Pokemon* Gold and Silver Version"? I must not be as self-aware as I had thought; I just didn't realize I had that kind of anxiety.



A "Master Ball DX" set will set you back \$100 (US). Its characters Magikarp and Oddish are only available in this set, kids are assured.

Isn't there a sort of religious fervor about that longing? The only thing I can think of for which I would/do anxiously wait in that manner is Christ's Second Advent and our life on the New Earth.

In line with this craze's secular "adventist" thinking, another site informed me I "gotta catch 'em all": "Now let me depart in peace," I should then be tempted to say; "Mine eyes have seen *Pokemon* in all its incarnations."

Unsettling craving

This is unsettling. Not because these colorful little creatures or the trend is "demonic," as some Christian groups have been saying. (We got a call the other day from an insistent woman who wanted to write an article pointing out the demonic nature of *Pokemon*; we politely declined the offer, and had to give her an increasingly firm No.)

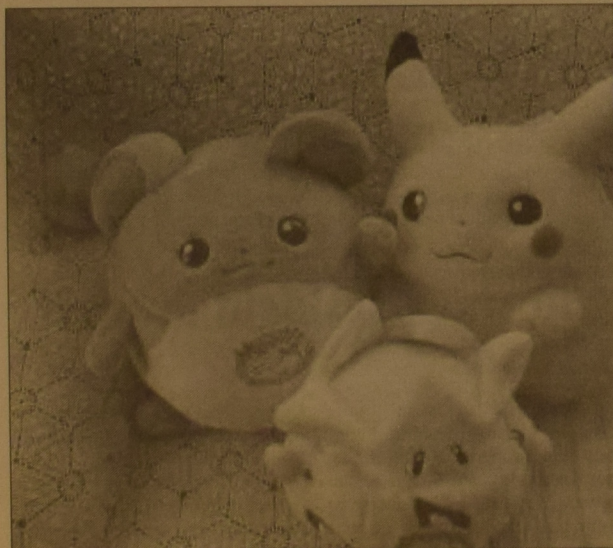
It's disturbing because these creatures and this craze seem to be filling a deep-seated need — emotional, imaginative, religious — that I wonder if children should even have.

Of course children need God, as much as we grown-ups do. And kids (like adults) have always

needed to "belong." But are children (and their emotional and spiritual needs) in the industrialized-technologized countries around the world being neglected, or at least ignored, to the point that they crave the shared emotion- and spirit-touching experience that families and friends and churches and schools and communities used to provide, working in concert with one another?

In Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador and Ecuador, the four countries I recently visited, *Pokemon* is unknown. Is the *Pokemon* factor absent there because vast numbers of people simply don't have television, much less computers? I don't think that's the main answer.

Whatever the serious problems in those countries, and whatever legitimate social critique one can offer, the vast majority of children still grow up with siblings, parents and extended-family members, which families then extend into communities in which everyone knows everyone and works together, worships together, plays and celebrates together. From suckling child to senior, each has a place. No need to wait for *Pokemon* to come.



A "life-size" set — Pikablu, Togepi and Pikachu — not (yet) sold in the U.S., but available via the Internet for a cool \$299 (US).

British postal services honors Wesleys

LONDON, England (EP) — The national postal service of Britain has chosen to honor John and Charles Wesley by putting their likenesses on the most popular denomination of Christmas postage stamps. The stamp is part of a series titled "The Christian's Tale," which celebrates 1,000 years of Christianity in Britain.

Texas artist Brody Neuschwander designed the artwork. The stamp is a tribute to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and his brother Charles who wrote many hymns, including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

Church

Internet site becomes 'church' for web searchers

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—It's an incorporated church which has no building, has worship services and devotions held in hundreds of homes all over the world, and boasts 200 members who have never seen one another. It's Totalechurch, one of the first totally Internet churches in cyberspace, and though it's only been in existence for five months, it's seeing rapid growth.

With Christian researcher George Barna predicting that 20 per cent of North Americans will get all religious training from the Internet by the year 2010, Lyndon Glaesman, pastor of Totalechurch and an alumnus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), says he and his family's "burden" for an Internet church was part of a "logical progression in using technology for the Kingdom."

An Internet church has been in a lot of people's minds, but the idea had received little follow-through, says Glaesman, who learned that the Satanic church preceded Totalechurch to the Internet. "That shows that we need to jump onto the technology bandwagon or lose to those that do," he asserts.

Astounding 'hit' rate

The "church," and its technology, have garnered an overwhelming response. Though the church has only been open since June 15 of this year, it has recorded more than 14,000 visits to the site, an astounding figure even for the Internet. And it has seen more than

50 professions of faith in Christ from all over the world.

The church roster currently includes members from across North America and from Bulgaria, Japan, Australia and South Africa; its daily devotions are sent to more than 450 participants every day, many of which are forwarded to others.

Through what Glaesman calls "nothing short of divine intervention," the church has seen overwhelming publicity beyond what he'd imagined. It has been featured in newspapers in Chicago, and even in Sophia, Bulgaria; it has been featured on radio programs in Chicago, in Montreal and across Alaska, and was recently one of the headlines on DataCast, a news service that goes to every compatible pager in the U.S.

"After that we got something like 3,000 hits in one week," said Stephen Glaesman, Lyndon Glaesman's son, who with his brother, Jesse, makes up the technical staff of Totalechurch. "We still don't know how it happened. It was just God," he says. "We're having to change servers because we're pulling so much bandwidth" [too many people are using up the limited space on the server].

Glaesman said his vision for Totalechurch is not to get a list of members who have the Internet church as their only church home. His vision, he says, is to work with the physical church, and get his members into an active fellowship as growing Christians.

"I'd like for Totalechurch to

enhance the work of the local church," he says. "We are going to start a pastor's page and get other churches to form a network of churches where I can get pastors to work with Totalechurch members."

Steering toward the 'physical' church

"We want to share the gospel with them and get them into a church," Bullard concurs. "A lot of people say, 'I'm not going in there. I've never been there, so why should I go now?' We want to show them why they need to be there."

As for the ministries of the church, there are many. Each week Glaesman sends out a RealAudio sermon for his members; Penny Glaesman, his wife and a student at NOBTS, leads a women's ministry through the Internet church; Misty Raybon, a staff member at NOBTS, leads a prayer ministry for the church; the "music ministry page" offers Christian CDs and MP3 downloads so searchers can listen to Christian music on their computers; the church offers a "youth ministry page" and a "pastor's page"; and in the future Glaesman hopes to launch ministries for men and children. The

church also is working on a chat room so that searchers/members and staff can interact in real time.

Glaesman says he is also working on a way to conduct a wedding over the Internet for two of his members. "We've got a few ideas," he said, "but we're still working on that one."

With so many things in the works, however, Penny Glaesman says that the ultimate goal is simply to reach people. "There are a lot of people who are just struggling and need someone to talk to," she said. "This has been a safe way for them to pour their hearts out once that trust is built."

Calgary-based oil company helping Sudan wage war against Christians

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Religion Today) — Proceeds from an oil pipeline partly owned by a Canadian company are helping Sudan's Islamic regime wage war against Christians in the south, human rights advocates say. Talisman Energy, headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, is a partner with the Khartoum government in a pipeline that brings oil northward from southern Sudan. Another partner is the China National Petroleum Company. Talisman calls itself "Canada's largest independent oil and gas producer."

"They are robbing our resources from under our feet, taking it north, selling it and using the money to exterminate us," asserts Roman Catholic Bishop Macram Max Gassis of El Obeid Diocese, Sudan.

Gassis spoke Nov. 9 at a National Conference on Sudan, held in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Institute on Religion and Democracy. The gathering brought together nearly 300 religious leaders and human rights activists from around the world. Gassis, whose ministry takes care of hundreds of orphans and children redeemed from slavery in



COURTESY CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL

Sudanese slaves who were freed recently by Christian Solidarity International.

the Nuba Mountains, received an award for his work.

U.S. senators Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) and William H. Frist (R-Tenn.) were recognized for their leadership in making Sudan a higher priority in U.S. foreign policy. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) delivered a concluding call to action.

Panels of experts detailed patterns of genocide in Sudan and described the international trade that supports the Khartoum regime. Smith College professor Eric Reeves called for a divestment campaign targeting Talisman Energy. "It will force Khartoum to the peace table," he said.

Re-election of Ukraine president greeted happily by Christians

KIEV, Ukraine (Religion Today) The re-election of Leonid Kuchma as president of Ukraine is an answer to prayer for the country's Christians. Kuchma defeated the Communist Party candidate in a run-off election on November 14. He has supported the church during his five-year

tenure, giving Christians more freedom and use of public buildings and property for churches, and has apologized for the persecution of Christians during the communist era.

Churches prayed and fasted for God to give Kuchma victory. "Look what the church can do,"

Dana Morey, an American who has preached in the country, told Religion Today.

"Only heaven knows the true impact of our prayers, but I think the church has made a difference here and it is wonderful."

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Church

Shipping containers provide ingenious solution for Trans World Radio

MOCUBA, Mozambique (EP) — On a continent where numerous countries are plagued by civil war and many missions organizations are unable to set up permanent facilities, Trans World Radio (TWR) has discovered an innovative means of constructing and transporting tailor-made studios. These studios are used to produce gospel programs to Africa. Customized studios manufactured from converted shipping containers have just debuted in northern Mozambique.

The need for a local studio in the village of Mocuba arose in the summer of 1998 because of escalating costs to produce, in terms of extensive time away from their target audience and the expense of frequent travel from the north to the southern capital city of Maputo.

As TWR leaders in Africa examined the possibility of shipping materials in a container and building everything on site, daunting obstacles surfaced, including construction workers spending months away from their homes in malaria-infested areas.

An alternative plan emerged. The shipping containers were modified as studios before shipping them from South Africa to Mocuba. When completed, these studios would also be furnished with offices, bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms. But additional hurdles materialized. The shipping option soon collapsed, prompting the decision to send containers by road instead of by ship.

Done in by deluge

But these container-studios didn't uneventfully roll into Mozambique. Though the containers with the equipment were ready to depart and the site in Mocuba was prepared, the project was further hampered by torrential rains. The deluge of water washed out many bridges, rendering travel impossible. There was nothing to do but wait.

Despite these setbacks, the containers finally arrived safely in Mocuba this fall. They were secured onto a concrete slab. A roof was built over them. TWR occupies two of the four containers: one as a studio and one as living quarters.

In September, a team of eight men was flown in to complete the studios and get them operational. Training and production started in mid-September, and soon after, the

transmitting facility in Swaziland began receiving programs produced in the Mocuba studios.

A follow-up centre has been established in the same area to help nurture new believers in their faith. "As a result of this centre, we can respond more effectively and efficiently to the great and urgent need our people have, once they have taken to heart the life-changing message of Jesus Christ," explains Luis Zaqueu, TWR-Mozambique national director. Since the Makhuwa and Lomwe programs began airing some six years ago, more than 300 churches have been started in the area.

Further into Africa

Because these pioneering studios can be constructed elsewhere and transported to building sites, TWR is exploring the possibility of providing one for Angola, a country once again ravaged by civil war.

Produced in these studio containers are broadcasts in the Lomwe language, spoken by more than 1.3 million Mozambicans. Also produced are broadcasts in the Makhuwa language. Numbering close to 5 million, the Makhuwa people represent Mozambique's largest ethnic group.

Once produced, these programs are then sent to and aired from TWR's transmitting site in neighboring Swaziland, which celebrated 25 years of Gospel ministry on Nov. 1. This novel style of producing programs comes at a time of celebration for TWR-Africa with the 25th anniversary of broadcasting from Swaziland. A new 100,000-watt transmitter was dedicated Nov. 1.

To reach other regions in Africa, TWR also broadcasts from a powerful short wave site in South Africa. From both of these facilities, programs air in more than 55 languages. "I have come to realize that radio is the unique and wonderful tool to bring the Gospel to our people in Africa," says Dr. Michael Cassidy, executive director of African Enterprise.

Each week, Trans World Radio broadcasts more than 1,200 hours of biblical programs worldwide in over 140 languages from 13 primary transmitting sites and by satellite, as well as via local stations. On Oct. 31 from Swaziland, TWR started broadcasting programs in the Bemba language, which may potentially reach more than half the population of Zambia.

Contradictions in the Bible

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself." (Prov 26:4)

"Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes." (Prov 26:5)

It is clear that these two verses from the book of Proverbs flatly contradict each other — at least on the linguistic level. But it is equally clear that they were deliberately put next to each other to make us think about this obvious contradiction.

According to Proverbs 25:1, these two verses are among the "more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah"; that is, they belong to the second "Solomonic collection" of the book of Proverbs, comprising chapters 25-29.

Presumably Solomon (or perhaps the men of Hezekiah) wanted to draw attention to the incongruity of these two sayings by putting them alongside each other. We are being provoked to ask the question: "Well, which is it? Should we answer a fool according to his folly or shouldn't we?"

'It all depends'

The answer is that it all depends. If we reflect on these two sayings we notice that the phrase "according to his folly" can mean two very different things. In one sense, this phrase means "on the same level as his folly." But in another sense it means "as his folly deserves."

The first sense fits with verse 4, and the second with verse 5. To answer a fool by going down to his level is not to be recommended; you only become like the fool yourself if you do that. But to answer a fool in a manner befitting his folly is to be recommended; that way he will not get conceited. Depending on the meaning we give to "according to his folly," both proverbs are true. The contradiction is only an apparent one.

The use of this kind of deliberate verbal contradiction is characteristic of wisdom literature, in the Bible and elsewhere. We are all familiar with common English proverbs which at first sight contradict each other. We say, "Birds of a feather flock together," and then turn around and say, "Opposites attract." On some occasions we say, "Look before you leap," but then again, "He who hesitates is lost."

Sometimes it may be appropriate to say, "Out of sight, out of mind"; but sometimes we would do better to cite the opposite proverb: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." It all depend on the situation.

Chapter & Verse



• Al Wolters
Mary S. Hulst Antonides

There is a sense in which all these sayings are true, but their truth depends on the way they are applied. In other words, wisdom sayings depend for their validity on the discernment of the proverb user.

Read 'according to its kind'

The kind of ambiguity and verbal contradiction is a feature especially of the wisdom literature of the Bible, which includes such books as Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. But it is found (more sporadically) in other books as well.

In order to understand this deliberate use of contradiction as a means to get a point across, it is often important to recognize when a passage in the Bible is "sapiential" — that is, belonging to wisdom literature.

For example, it is helpful to recognize that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 is sapiential in nature. Like many of the rabbis of his day, Jesus used the teaching methods and literary techniques of the wisdom literature. That's why the Sermon on the Mount contains sayings which seem at first glance to be quite incompatible with each other.

Forces listeners to question

Jesus says, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). But then he says, "Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them" (Matt. 6:1). By using these two apparently contradictory formulations, Jesus forces his hearers to ask: "In what sense can both be true?" How would you answer that question?

The use of verbal contradictions in the Bible teaches us, among other things, to be alert to the different kinds of literature which the Bible contains. What holds for wisdom literature may not hold for the historical, the legal, or the epistolary literature of the Bible. Each must be read "according to its kind."

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. He says he agrees with Emerson that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

Leaders condemn violence in name of religion

GENEVA, Switzerland (Religion Today) — Religious differences should never be used to justify violence or discrimination, world religious leaders declared Oct. 24. Representatives of the major religions, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, issued an appeal to religious and political leaders worldwide that religion never be used to justify violence, Ecumeni-

cal News International said. Fifty-six conflicts — including those in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and East Timor — have religious elements, the leaders said in the document they issued, The Geneva Spiritual Appeal.

"Religion is part of the identity by which one ethnic group sets itself against another," Protestant theologian William McComish

said. Signers of The Geneva Spiritual Appeal include representatives of all major religious faiths. Those present at the ceremony held at St. Pierre Cathedral included Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox leaders.

Comment

Wading through history while we head toward the future

Dear Adrian,

I recently read Jim Schaap's *Family Album*, his history of the "Christian Reformed family." [Schaap is a short story writer and professor of literature at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.] Literally thousands of people saw the production of the play based on the book. I enjoyed the play, but I enjoyed the book even more. I relived a good deal of my own history as I read it.

My mother grew up in the "Pillar Church," the one established by Van Raalte — one of the denomination's founding fathers — in Holland, Michigan. My dad emigrated from the Netherlands and became a minister in the Christian Reformed Church. So they were very much part of many of the events and controversies described in the book, and our dinner table in Grand Rapids, [Michigan,] often reflected the feistiness and color, for better and for worse, of those times.

I think Schaap has done an exceptional piece of work in making the book both readable and fair. It's not "objective" in the sense that he simply reports the facts. It's clear what his own bias is. But he shows a deep respect for the people he might disagree with, a quality that has certainly not always been present in the controversies and foibles of the CRC. He celebrates our strengths and helps us laugh at ourselves, other qualities we haven't been noted for.

I could go on about the book, but you should read it for yourself. Besides my own reminiscing, what it made me think about a bit more was the place of history in our lives and in the life of our church.

Personal and family history is big these days. There is a whole industry out there offering to help you trace your family tree. And is there anything more fascinating than finding out what Uncle Harry really was up to all those years, or what was the *real* reason your parents or your grandparents emigrated?

But on a communal or social level it seems to me we find it hard to think about our history. We're being told *ad nauseam* that our history has been made and written by white men. And so we now have black history, women's history, native history (among others). No doubt correctives have been needed, but it brings us back to Pilate's question: "What is truth?"

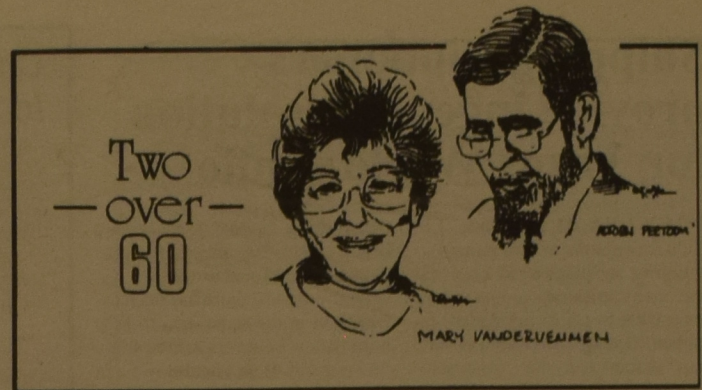
I'm afraid it makes us more cynical than we ought to be about the past. "We're not interested in all that 'old stuff,' and besides, you can't even believe what you read. This is end of the millennium; let's get on with the future."

But the old saying that those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it is still true. And our world gives us all kinds of evidence that we simply can't get past history. Quebec can't forget England. Catholics and Protestants in Ireland can't forget their injustices. Ancient tribal warfare keep breaking out all over the world from quarrels that are hundreds of years old. "Let's forget about the past" simply doesn't work. History is a fact of life.

I relish the fact that I belong to a congregation that is welcoming people from all over the world into its fellowship. We need to familiarize ourselves with their histories. But they also need to know ours. Many of them want to. And then we shouldn't simply make jokes about wooden shoes or the Vander Somethings in an effort, well-meant though it be, to accommodate them. We need to know how we've gotten where we are, and we ought to be able to tell others without embarrassment.

I congratulate Jim Schaap for showing us that it can be done.

Mary



Dear Mary,

My first reaction to your column was very strong — and against wishing to read this particular book. I have no problem with your philosophical observations about the importance of reflecting on history. How could I? My bookcases are full of historical works. Indeed, "history is a fact of life."

No, my problem is about books written by "insiders" about the institutions they clearly love. I have deep suspicions about those, suspicions that arise out of other deep suspicions about the major institutions in my life.

Books about Christian Reformed Church history do not interest me very much. This is partly because I became a CRC member fairly late in my life, and for reasons other than conversion or a strong admiration for the CRC's essential character.

There is an adult-immigrant side to this. I suspect that my counterparts to your memories reside far more in Dutch ecclesiastical history. I remember reading a number of books that appeared in the Netherlands in the 1960s which were full of ironic reflections on pre-war Dutch Reformedness.

On occasion I actually encounter some of them again in Canadian bookcases. I'm at home on their pages, for the life they described was the life of my own youth, and I shared those books' lack of enthusiasm for what had been wrought in the name of being right and righteous.

After I read them I admire their authors, feel the pain of so many idle battles then, and my connection with those battles, as their consequences remain with me and my peers to this day. I'm happy that some of their trash is now in the trashcan of history, and I regret the loss of worthy elements. History is particular, and one's personal history is deeply rooted in one's very young life.

Adult immigrants have a specific problem. In some fashion, all adult immigrants become displaced persons, physically removed from their past (and its language!), and never quite at home in their future (a new language).

Years ago I read Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*, the story of a Polish-Canadian immigrant. In this book I found myself, nevermind that I'm of different ethnic origin. The author had come to Vancouver from Cracow, Poland, as a teenage girl, and she describes with passion and conviction her bewildering time of trying to fit in, learn English and behave like the natives, but not being able to do any of it perfectly.

The book is full of pain, and in the end, about the gains of migration. But it is also about the profound losses: some of us never feel entirely at home anywhere, anymore, forever.

Permit me to say a bit more about how I feel about institutions, and my reluctance about reading books written by insiders, like Schaap. The older I get, the more I know that two institutional experiences early in my life have left a permanent legacy of suspicion towards all institutions. And nothing in my subsequent personal history has eradicated those suspicions.

The first was the church schism in the Netherlands in the years 1943-45 and beyond. I was only about 10 then, but my memories are vivid: adults busy maligning one another and dueling for institutional power. I've seen plenty of it since then inside the church, though happily not so vicious as in those years.

The second blow to institutional trust came during my high school years. Some years ago I reflected on the intensity with which I had become an educational publisher with a number of axes to grind. I linked my commitments to the many victims left behind by my Christian (ha!) high school in my native country, which set standards deliberately constructed to have a (large) percentage of students fail along the way.

Often the students' last day of school was also a day of failure. I still have vivid memories of the school destroying the confidence and self-respect of one such student, a lonely, only child with whom I went sailing sometimes in his canoe, and with whom I shared a bench for a year.

Our "Christian" school destroyed him. That the same school helped me succeed does not seem so important to me as the fact that it destroyed him.

Memories such as those were strong engines in my commitment to work for schools that were less interested in disciplines and discipline and more interested in the varied needs of students.

I'm afraid I'm not so open to Schaap's position, which, I presume on the basis of what other stuff I have read from him is: the CRC may show some scars and may have black moments, but it's basically a pretty good enterprise. I think more about the many victims it left behind and cast off over the decades. Books about them cannot be written by insiders.

So, I'm happy for you that you have found a book that opens up your own past in meaningful ways. I have similar books in my own library. I'm suspicious that this one cannot be one of them.

Adrian

Adrian Peetoom is a retired educational editor who lives in Waterloo, Ont. Mary Vander Vennen is a retired therapist who lives in Toronto.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IS in nowadays, though church membership is not. In the past 20 years the number of different worship communities has doubled. It used to be that dissatisfied members of Reformed churches would likely become Presbyterian, or Pentecostal or Anglican, but now they can pick any of the more than 2,000 North American religious groups identified in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of American Religions*.

We almost automatically call California the cradle of any new thing, including new ways of worship, but in this case, surprisingly, Canada has more religious groups per capita than the U.S. does.

Since Canada's population is so spread out there have sprung up religious core groups unique to certain areas: in B.C., many Sikh factions; in Montreal, Haitians with their various Voodoo cultic expressions; in Halifax, the Vajradhatu International, one of the world's more important centres of Tibetan Buddhism; in Calgary, the first Temple of Priapus, a Greek god seen as the personification of male procreative power, incorporated there in 1972 by a dentist—there are now six such temples in Canada which have a mainly male gay and bisexual membership, who avow the power and beauty of the phallus and see the male member as their path to truth and wisdom. Says the encyclopedia: "Sex is a vital part of the services, which may also involve sex magic.... Semen is regarded with reverence and is considered a sacrament of the most holy seed."

STILL SMOKING? Doctors now link smoking to unhappy childhoods. "People take up the habit to medicate away pain of suffering dismal experience," a new study says.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that unhappy childhoods are strongly linked to smoking among teenagers and adults. The worse the experience in childhood—divorced parents, parental neglect—the

greater the likelihood people will smoke early in life and heavily in adulthood, said the study, led by Dr. Roberet Anda of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The study found that those who use nicotine to ease the pain of their childhoods "may need special assistance to help them quit," including counselling or antidepressant medication.

I LISTEN TO DIFFERENT preachers. It's one of my many interests. So when there was a special multi-church-sponsored celebration at an arena where a well-known Christian leader was to speak, I went.

Thousands of people were there. The massed choir did a good job, and there was spirited singing—in which I enjoyed participating when I knew the tune. I went to this assembly to find out more about the evangelical movement and was intrigued by the event's rallying cry: "His Kingdom Come, Celebrating Jesus at the Millennium."

I love the Church and only wish the best for it. I had really hoped that, given the speaker, I would hear something new. I didn't. It seems to me that the evangelical movement isn't moving, is mired in misplaced triumphalism and is stuck in a past in which Christians had important positions in society.

I heard the call to seek public office and so reform society. Didn't Jimmy Carter try that? And how about Preston Manning? Has his tenure heralded a new phase in Christian politics? Does anybody remember the Christian Heritage Party, killed by infighting? What is the "Kingdom," anyway?

That was left up in the air, literally, with scores of hands pointing to heaven. Not a word about Creation, admittedly my hobby horse. In that regard, matters in some areas are a bit more advanced.

The Interfaith campaign by the Pennsylvania Council of Churches has prepared a statement that warns that we human beings are doing violence to God's creation by causing global warming. Its explicit words say that "our Faith de-

mands that we act as stewards of creation, not squander and destroy God's gifts. Global climate changes are destroying people's lives and health, as well as our habitat. In these circumstances, failure to act would be truly immoral.... People of faith have an obligation to act on their religious and spiritual responsibilities to help create the consensus for our nation and all nations to be stewards of God's good earth."

I may add that our cosmos is also God's Kingdom, and the New Creation God's kingdom to come, something not even hinted at in that mass meeting I attended.

Or did I miss something? I don't think so, but I gladly stand corrected. My reaction was that if this is the best evangelical Christianity can offer, then there is little life left in that branch of the Tree of Life. No wonder people leave the church in droves and yet do not find what they seek.

TIME MAGAZINE HAD a special issue entitled "Beyond 2000." The editors approached people recognized as experts in their fields, asking them to give their "Visions for the 21st Century." All the contributors realized that "prediction is very hard, especially when it's about the future." I can't, of course, cite everything, and so will tick off a highlight here and there.

(1) Predictions for the ten top diseases in 2020 in order of numbers affected: Heart disease, severe depression, traffic accidents, stroke, chronic lung diseases, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, war injuries, diarrheal diseases, HIV/AIDS. It seems to me that most of those are due to personal or environmental stress.

(2) The average number of Americans who are overweight will increase to 75 per cent (!) In the year 2020, from 47 per cent today. Just imagine the illnesses resulting from being overfed and undernourished.

(3) We may not drive ourselves to the complete oblivion of biological extinction, but spectres of famine, warfare and disease will rise in the next few centuries.

(4) The seas make up 95 per cent of our planet's biosphere—the realm where all living things exist—and we are stripping and poisoning it, depriving it of its ability to sustain life.

(5) Will we still eat meat? Maybe not, if we wake up to what the mass production of animal flesh is doing to our health, and the planet's.

(6) Will we run out of gas? No—unfortunately. And that's the problem because we will burn up the planet, or at least our place on it.

(7) How hot will it get? No one knows, but the potential perils of climate change make it unwise for us to ignore the greenhouse effect.... And then how cold? Warming may affect sea currents, triggering an ice age.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT as we enter the Y2K, there are enough reasons Y2Pray. A few more weeks to go till that memorable date. I imagine that we will be bombarded with even more dire predictions. While I was standing in line at the grocery check-out I saw a magazine with the numbers 666, Armageddon and Y2K all prominently displayed on the cover.

Well, I think there is a greater danger than Y2K, something way up in the sky, reminding me of the sudden confusion caused when the Tower of Babel, millennia ago, had also thrust to the heavens. I am referring to solar storms.

Dr. D. James Baker, head of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), recently reported that "the world's power grids and satellites could experience major disruptions due to intense solar activity. The United States is particularly vulnerable to cyclical periods of solar

storms, called solar maximum, because of heavy reliance on satellites for communications. The next three years will see an increase in the number and intensity of such storms."

Continues Dr Baker: "When solar maximum occurs, the sun bursts at its seams with explosive power, and as it churns there is potential for electrical power outages, radio problems and the disabling of satellites. These storms may be the real Y2K problem, as space storms can impact the operational reliability of electrical transmission systems worldwide."

Suppose this happens: it may paralyze electrical systems, television relay, global navigation systems, cellular phones, banking facilities, and destroy (perhaps permanently) many of the satellites in orbit. Lots of smoking guns out there.

Bert Hielema was a heavy smoker from his 15th to his 29th year. He remembers smoking 80 cigarettes one 24-hour period when he was Commander of the Guard of the Barracks in Assen, the Netherlands, in 1950. He had a happy childhood and was thus able to quit. Thank God. He lives in Tweed, Ont.



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Candidates should be committed to teaching and pursuing scholarship from a Reformed Christian perspective, and should possess or be near completion of a doctoral degree. The positions begin August 1, 2000 (subject to budgetary and Board approval). Interested candidates should submit a curriculum vitae with the names and addresses of three referees.

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Redeemer College offers equal employment opportunities to qualified applicants. In accordance with Canadian Immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Youth Position Available

East Christian Reformed Church of Strathroy, Ont., is seeking to fill a newly established full-time position of **Youth Director**.

Those who have a sense of calling and passion in this strategic ministry and are committed to a confessionally Reformed perspective may direct their resume and/or inquiries to: Rich Hamstra, Youth Search Committee, East Chr. Ref. Church, 476 Metcalfe St. East, Strathroy, ON N7G 1R5 Phone 519-245-1715

The Biotech Age and our future

Moving toward 'perfection': Human life codes deciphered

Harry der Nederlanden

Each of us carries in nearly every cell of our bodies the entire set of codes that made us what we are. This information was present right from the time we were conceived, and it told our cells when to begin setting aside some as brain cells, heart cells, skin cells, blood cells and so on. It is stored in 46 chromosomes, each of which is composed of millions of bits of chemical called bases. There may be as many as three billion bits of information inscribed into our genes: the pattern of God's handiwork as he knits our flesh together from conception to adulthood.

This genetic code – except for about one per cent of it – is the same for each and every person on the globe. That one per cent carries the information that marks each of us as unique. Until very recently, we have not been able to decipher this vast code contained in every cell of our bodies.

International co-operation

In 1988 an international project was launched on the scale of the space program. It would include biologists, chemists, engineers, computer scientists, and mathematicians from labs located in the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Japan and several other countries. A \$3 billion price tag was put on the huge co-operative venture between government, private enterprise and the universities.

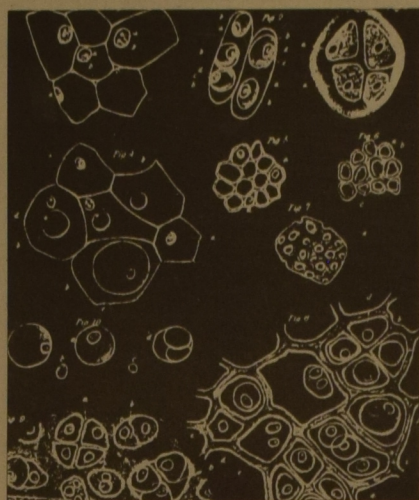
Its mission was to map the entire set of genetic instructions that make up the human "genome," the name given to the complete package of genes belonging to a species. It was called the Human Genome Project (HGP).

Computer scientists and mathematicians are involved because the process of deciphering three billion bits of information required the development of computer software that could handle such huge quantities of information. According to reports issued in October, the project is ahead of its 15-year schedule, with over one-third of genes already identified.

When the project is finished this does not mean that scientists will have figured out the precise function of every bit of genetic information, for many human traits are probably determined by several gene segments in interaction with our environment.

A new 'Copernican' revolution

The impact of the project on our understanding of human nature has been compared to the Copernican revolution. John Naisbitt (author



Theodor Schwann's 19th century drawings of plant and animal cells (above) helped convince scientists that all living things are made of cells.

of *Megatrends*) has declared: "Genetic technologies will overwhelm all other technologies, including information technologies, in the next century. Not since the splitting of the atom have we developed such consequential technologies" (*High Tech, High Touch*, 1999). Jeremy Rifkin, in a book that sounds dire warnings about what is happening in biotechnology, predicts: "Our very sense of self and society will likely change, as it did when the early Renaissance spirit swept over medieval Europe more than seven hundred years ago" (*The Biotech Century*, 1998).

The potential for good from this project is tremendous, for there are about 4,000 diseases that have a genetic component. About 20 million Americans are afflicted with "genetic" diseases, and such diseases are responsible for 25-30 per cent of all admissions to children's hospitals. Muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, neurofibromatosis, Down's syndrome, sickle cell anemia are all diseases that are passed on in families from one generation to another. Others, such as schizophrenia, alcoholism, Alzheimers and manic depression also seem to have a genetic component, although it is unlikely they will ever be traced to a specific gene.

The search for cures to genetic diseases is not the only thing driving the project, however. The information gathered is expected to provide a basis for developing radically new therapies and drugs for every ailment under the sun.

The website for the HGP openly advertises it as an investment that will yield huge dividends: "The potential for commercial development of

genomics research presents U.S. industry with a wealth of opportunities, and sales of DNA-based products and technologies in the biotech industry are projected to exceed \$45 billion by 2009." This prospect has lured a number of multinationals into the field, who are doing their own gene mapping.

Why should private companies invest millions into such research on their own? Because the U.S. Patent Office has ruled that the information is patentable. One

such company, Celera Genomics, has exploded onto the scene in a dramatic way, announcing its intention to apply for patents on 6,500 gene segments that it has mapped. Celera was started only last year by Craig Venter, who had been working for one of the British labs of the HGP. Celera has leaped ahead by its use of supercomputers, and because it is far less meticulous than some others in the field in identifying gene fragments, applying for patents on the basis of relatively skimpy information.

Profits from 'Bioinformatics'

Even before the appearance of Celera, there had been a huge outcry against the idea that the very stuff of human life should be patentable, and it seems very likely that political pressures will be exerted to keep the information in the public domain. Scientists working on certain diseases have already been complaining that every time they conduct tests involving patented segments of DNA they are required to pay a fee to the company that holds the patent.

A company like Celera has no intention of conducting research itself; it intends only to make its information available, over the Internet, in fact, and to profit in this way. It is into what is called "bioinformatics," a brand new industry.

Some critics have resigned themselves to the fact that the new sciences are going to be ruled by market forces. Without the prospect of making large profits, private enterprise would not be investing so heavily into this technology. Others, like Jeremy

Rifkin, who has been writing prolifically for several years to defend free access to genetic information of plants and animals as well as humans, argues that the idea of patenting genes is not only "desacralizing," but it will also put huge strains on the cost of health care. Future research will become so expensive that only wealthy multinationals will be able to participate.

This is by no means the only problem connected with mapping the human genome. Besides the outcry against patenting human genes, critics have also raised warnings about unequal access to any benefits that are expected to come out of it, for they will be expensive. Is this technology only going to benefit the West? Perhaps only the well-to-do in the West?

Not all goodness and light

The technology may even harm those it purports to help. Identifying defective genes will probably be the easiest part of the process. Developing cures will take considerably more time. The gene involved in sickle cell anemia, for example, was identified over 40 years ago; yet no cure has

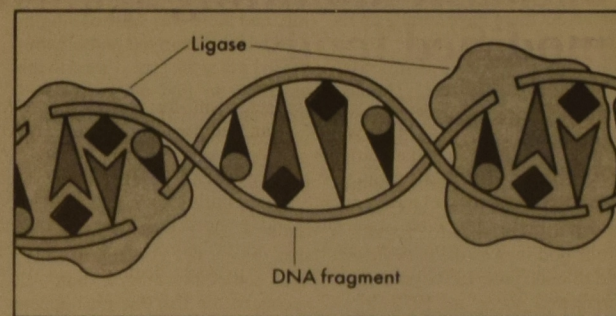
however, for if you know that you have a genetic predisposition to heart disease, breast cancer or high cholesterol, you can alter your lifestyle to add years to your life.

Therapy or cosmetics?

One of the most difficult issues that will have to be confronted as the technology develops to the point where we will be able to repair or alter genes is the difference between therapeutic and cosmetic intervention.

At present scientists distinguish sharply between "somatic" gene therapy and "germline" therapy. In somatic therapy, only the person being treated is affected; in germline therapy, not just one person is treated, but all his or her offspring as well, and thereby the entire human gene pool is affected. Decisions to do such therapy, then, involve not just one person or one family, but have repercussions for the entire human race.

French Anderson, the first to do somatic gene therapy, makes a strict distinction between the two procedures and condemns the use of the new technology to improve anything. Jeremy Rifkin is even more extreme: he called for a ban



WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA ILLUSTRATIONS (4)

Gene splicing: A gene-sized fragment of DNA is isolated from another organism, and the bases of the fragment are spliced to the bases of a molecule by using a chemical called ligase.

been found.

Once the human genome has been mapped, it will be a simple matter for insurance companies to identify those with a genetic make-up that will lead to large medical expenses in the future, and to refuse coverage to an entire class of people. All it will take is a simple blood test. If employers gain access to such information, will they be able to resist passing by those who are programmed for health problems?

Several Christian denominations have already issued statements warning against the use of genetic screening to justify discrimination. The same knowledge can be invaluable to the individual,

on all germline research because it tampers with the natural order, which he considers sacred.

'Playing God'

In the long run, I believe, the attempt to set such hard and fast boundaries cannot be sustained. There are no commonly agreed-on definitions of what constitutes a disease. It is quite easy to make pronouncements against so-called "designer babies," that is, babies assembled in the lab according to some ideal type, such as a girl with the figure of Vanna White and the I.Q. of Einstein, but it is more difficult to hold the line against parents who are faced with having a child

Continued on page 13...

The Biotech Age and our future

Farming ... molecules – a new and lucrative industry

Harry der Nederlanden, with files from the *Globe and Mail*

Grafting human DNA into plants to produce ingredients of drugs that fight disease is one of the most promising of the new frontiers in biotechnology. By adding a human gene to the rubber tree, the tree is enabled to produce albumin as well as latex for rubber. Albumin is used in hospitals to treat shock. The pharmaceutical industry is experimenting with many kinds of plants to seek ways to make them produce basic molecules for use in vaccines, drugs, vitamins and cosmetics. The practice has grown from science fiction into reality in less than five years.

Plants have long been a source of medicines, but genetic engineering has made it possible to move many processes from the lab into the field. Instead of combining chemicals in test tubes, scientists are using transgenic plants – plants with foreign genes inserted into their DNA – to produce the desired chemicals on their own.

The process is supposed to give the consumer a cheaper source of



The tobacco plant.

many ingredients for drugs, lowering the cost of drugs dramatically (or increasing the profits for pharmaceutical companies).

The industry that is emerging is known as molecular farming. Representatives of the biotech industry predict that, although it is now still largely in the research stage, molecular farming will be a multi-million dollar industry in the very near future.

Tobacco farmers in Ontario are

watching developments closely and hopefully, for a lot of transgenic research is focusing on tobacco, corn and potatoes because they are easy to engineer.

Good use for tobacco

Field trials are being done with tobacco supplemented with a human gene to produce interleukin-10, a substance used to treat inflammatory bowel syndrome and Crohn's disease.

As more people give up smoking, and anti-smoking legislation becomes stricter, one can imagine the eagerness with which tobacco farmers look forward to these new possibilities. There are understandably huge pressures on the scientific community to rush into production.

Others urge caution. They are afraid that the new varieties could escape into the environment and initiate changes that are uncontrollable, doing harm in completely unpredictable ways. The genes might, for example, enter into related species of weeds to introduce transformations that might be irreversible and harmful.

Backlash mounting against genetically modified foods

CC Staff

WASHINGTON, /OTTAWA – American and Canadian farmers were recently advised by both government agencies and independent critics not to grow corn, soybeans and canola from genetically engineered seed. At present, more than half the soybeans and 30 per cent of corn are grown from such seed in the U.S. In Canada, 35 per cent of corn and 70 per cent of canola are genetically modified to make them resistant to herbicides.

The advice came after a strong backlash in Europe and England against genetically modified (GM) foods, triggered in part by the scare about mad cow disease. In 1995, Europeans blocked imports of American beef because cattle in the U.S. are treated with sex hormones that promote growth. Militant groups in Europe are now advocating a ban on all GM foods.

Companies like Gerber and Heinz have decided not to use GM corn or soybean products in their baby food. Because of lower demand overseas for such products, the multinational Archer Daniels Midland is paying considerably less per bushel for modified crops than for traditional ones.

In North America there is no

mechanism for sorting out GM from traditional soybeans or canola, so the entire crop is "tainted." A few years ago, Monsanto invested many millions in biotechnology, and its stock rose sharply. But the backlash against GM foods caused a 27 per cent decline in its stock price over the last year.

Some analysts have predicted that ag-biotech (the use of genetic engineering in agriculture) is going the way of the nuclear industry and the fur trade. Activists who fear that people are losing their power to decide issues of public health and environment to multinationals have trashed several McDonald's restaurants in France.

"What we reject," said a spokesperson for the Peasant Confederation of European farmers, "is the idea that the power of the marketplace becomes the dominant force in all societies, and that multinationals like McDonald's or Monsanto come to impose the food we eat and the seeds we plant."

Knife-edge of starvation

Even those who believe in the long-term possibilities of genetic engineering have been critical of the way companies like Monsanto have thrown their weight about. In

a recent speech, Gordon Conway of the Rockefeller Foundation, which has long funded crop research around the world, warned corporate heads against a rush to get products to market. It is creating a strong backlash.

He also criticized the developing monopoly by rich multinationals on "germplasm" (engineered seed), which is taking control from poor countries so that they can no longer experiment with and develop their own crops. The power and wealth of the multinationals is gradually stymying public-sector research.

Conway also pointed out that the so-called green revolution, which used traditional methods to increase crop yields in developing countries, has peaked. Biotechnology will be needed in the future to produce enough food to feed the hungry of the world, but it cannot be introduced the way big companies like Monsanto have been doing, without regard to farmers in poorer countries. "There cannot be a stable future," he warned, "in which at least a third of the world's population live on the knife edge of starvation while the rest of us become more and more prosperous. It simply will not work."

This little piggy went to...



Nursing piglets: possible brain cell donors?

Harry der Nederlanden

Two months ago a woman in New York received a transplant of cells taken from 12 little pigs. She received an injection of about 30 million pig brain cells into a part of her brain damaged by stroke. It is too early to tell whether she was helped in any lasting way.

Pharmaceutical giants are pumping millions into the new biotechnology. Pig livers are expected to be in use in the near future to keep those alive who are waiting for a human donor. These livers will come from pigs that have been genetically modified with human genes.

Critics warn that huge risks are being taken, not just with the life of particular patients, but with all our lives. Such xeno-transplantations, that is, such blending of animal with human genes, could transfer dangerous viruses present in almost all pigs to human beings. At present these viruses do not infect us, but such transplantations may trigger unpredictable changes in their nature. Scientists point to the AIDS virus, which is thought to have come from apes after undergoing a change.

Laying the burden of proof

Writing in the *Globe and Mail* (Oct. 27), Arthur Schafer, director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics at the University of Manitoba, asks: "Which risks are worth taking for which benefits?" A person facing death may be willing to take great risks, but what of the risks to the rest of society? "The precautionary principle requires," he argues, "that when a new technology is being introduced, the burden of proof should rest with those developing the technology to prove its safety in advance, rather than on critics to prove harm."

Schafer goes on to suggest that industry and the scientific experts working for the industry have too much at stake to leave such grave deliberations to them. Citizens should shape bioethical policies through public debate and political action.

Moving toward 'perfection'

... continued from page 12
with dwarfism.

What degree of disfigurement or handicap qualifies as "disease"? Any prohibition erected against germline research is sure to tumble once the genes implicated in Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis or heart disease are identified. If the tools become available to remove the gene that has caused cystic fibrosis in member after member of a given family, do we deny them that healing because we are afraid of "playing God"?

Genetics research of this kind is

no more a forbidden knowledge than any other, but, because of its great power, and therefore its liability to great abuse, it does demand close examination, public discussion and regulation.

Perhaps no technology we have created puts us before such great temptations, exposing at one and the same time the extent of the power God has entrusted to us and the degree to which those powers have taken on a life of their own, aligning themselves with the powers and principalities we are fighting in our own flesh.

The Biotech Age and our future

Photographer markets super children

Christian biologists speak to commodification of human eggs, sperm

Alan Doerksen

MALIBU, Calif. — A California photographer has started a website-based business selling the eggs and sperm of female and male fashion models to buyers interested in having beautiful children. Two biology professors are critical of him for what they see as "commodification" of human eggs and sperm, and because of other problems that could arise for children born of such unions.

Ron Harris is a photographer based in Malibu, Calif., whose work includes fashion photography and directing television for Playboy. Recently, Harris set up a website, (www.ronsangels.com) in which he accepts bids for the eggs of beautiful female models, some of whose photos are featured on the site. Bids are accepted from a minimum of \$15,000 (US), going up in \$1,000 increments. Models receive the full amount, with Harris's agency collecting an additional 20 per cent commission.

Harris's website bills itself as "the only website that provides you with the unique opportunity to bid on eggs from beautiful, healthy and intelligent women. Now open, a sperm auction for beautiful, healthy and intelligent men."

Best 'Natural selection'

In an editorial on the site, Harris describes his service as "Darwin's 'natural selection' at its very best.



A sampling of "Ron's angels," from Harris's website.

The highest bidder gets youth, beauty and social skills." Harris sees his service as offering clients a chance to produce "super children."

"We all know that children of beautiful or brilliant people often share those characteristics," writes Harris. But he admits, "Sometimes, spectacularly, they do not. Of course, there are no guarantees that the children produced from superior genes combined with your own will result in similarly superior children..."

Abhorrent business

Beneath photos of several female models, none of whose names are identified, Harris writes to interested women: "There are 6.1 million infertile women in America who are looking for eggs so that they can have children.... You could choose the girl who most resembles you. A better-looking version of you." Harris also addresses interested men: "There are also millions of

men from around the world who would love to have their genes combined with beautiful, healthy and intelligent women."

Harry Cook, a professor of biology at The King's University College in Edmonton, calls Harris's business "quite abhorrent." But Cook says he is not aware of any laws in Canada restricting sale of human eggs and sperm.

Four years ago, a Royal Commission wrote an extensive report for the federal government called *New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies: Setting Boundaries, Enhancing Health*. This contained "about 200 recommendations, none of which have been adopted," asserts Cook.

Recently, Cook attended a conference on bioethics in Edmonton, at which a federal government representative explained that these recommendations haven't been adopted because of "conflicting issues," Cook reports. "It's really a cop-out," he says.

Cook would like to see some of

the Royal Commission's recommendations adopted by Parliament. For example, "People should not profit financially from sperm or embryos." Cook asserts, "To sell sperm for many thousands of dollars is reprehensible."

He notes that selling of sperm over the Internet is not new. Ten years ago, he says, a man named Shockley, also based in California, was marketing the sperm of Nobel Prize winners.

Cook does not disagree with the practice of artificial insemination. But he believes "it should be in the bounds of a permanent relationship," i.e., as marriage. "The main issue is the commodification of the egg" and of the physical beauty of models.

Few fertility regulations

Hessel Bouma, professor of biomedical ethics at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., notes that there are no federal American laws against Harris's business, although, "we have laws about experimentation with embryos."

"You would find the fertility industry in the U.S. has few regulations," he notes. "As a consequence, we've not been able to muster groundswell support for putting modest restrictions on reproductive technologies." Some Americans want the fertility industry "more stringently regulated," says Bouma, but "it is so difficult

to get a majority consensus."

Bouma observes, "In Britain, you are not allowed to buy and sell eggs and sperm. By removing that commercial inducement, it retains that concept of [life as a] gift."

Bouma sees Harris's business as a reflection of American entrepreneurial spirit. This "combination of autonomy and a profit motive ... extends to even designing our children," he asserts. "It tends to be the person who can afford this is welcome to do so."

One problem Bouma has with Harris's business is that egg and sperm donors take no responsibility for children that result from purchases. "It's surrendering responsibility," he says. "It's also denying a person-to-be a basic right: knowing their genetic heritage.... There is a confidentiality and anonymity given to the donor."

Moral status for eggs and sperm?

But another question raised is: "How do you weigh the rights of someone who doesn't exist yet? What is the moral status of eggs and sperm?" Although the website advertises what Bouma calls "the superficial attractiveness of the donor," this attractiveness might not translate into similar qualities in a child.

Concerned Christians can take **See SUPER CHILDREN p. 18...**

Scientists consider cloning mammoth

Alan Doerksen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Scientists who have found the world's first intact mammoth carcass are considering using DNA or sperm from the frozen animal to clone it. A Christian professor of biomedical ethics finds this possibility "very intriguing" but doubts that it would be successful.

A French-led team of scientists, which includes members from the U.S., the Netherlands and Russia, recently rescued the mammoth from the tundra it had been frozen in for 20,000 years, in Siberia, reports the Associated Press (AP).

Smelling live elephants

"It was like walking into the stall at the zoo where the elephants sleep — suddenly you could smell their breath, their dung," said Dick Mol, a Dutch scientist who helped excavate the almost perfectly-preserved adult male.

In October, workers jack-

hammered the frozen mammoth from the rock-hard permafrost. Five days after airlifting the mammoth by helicopter to the Siberian town of Khatanga, the team of paleontologists said their find could lead to a breakthrough in cloning an animal extinct for 10,000 years.

"It's a question of getting quality DNA," Yves Coppens, a French paleontologist, told AP.

The team must now thaw out the 23-tonne carcass without damaging its skin and internal organs. Molecular biologists and parasitologists have taken specimens from internal organs.

The mammoth's teeth and tusks told the team the mammoth died at age 47. It's been named "Jarkov" after the reindeer-herding family which discovered it in 1997. The mammoth was virtually intact, except for its head, which was exposed to air as the top layers of permafrost slowly melted.

Some scientists have suggested

using the mammoth's frozen sperm to breed it with elephants. Mol is skeptical of this, pointing out: "Its natural environment has disappeared."

Intriguing possibility

Hessel Bouma, professor of biomedical ethics at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., told Christian Courier that he finds the idea of cloning a mammoth "a very intriguing sort of thing. It stimulates the imagination."

But the prospect raises some questions, such as: "Where are you going to get these elephant eggs from?" There is also the question of whether or not it is ethical to use an elephant for this purpose. Cow eggs, Bouma notes, would be easier to obtain because of the much greater abundance of cows compared to elephants.

"There is substantial expense involved" with cloning experiments, says Bouma. Such expense

could prevent other more worthwhile projects from taking place. "If we make this a multi-million dollar project but don't have enough money for vaccines," then we will have missed some key stewardship issues, Bouma asserts. "God has put us as responsible stewards over creation."

"From a technical viewpoint, it's highly unlikely it would be successful," Bouma adds, because interspecies cloning is difficult, and the mammoth's cells were "haphazardly frozen."

Latitude

Comparing experiments with cloning to using reproductive technological experiments on humans, Bouma says, "There's a very significant difference there.... There's latitude for us to be creative and use animals for human well-being. We can buy and sell animals. We shouldn't buy and sell humans." Bouma also believes we should not

buy and sell human sperm or eggs.

Harry Cook, a biology professor at The King's University College in Edmonton, agrees with Bouma that reproductive experiments involving animals or humans are "a totally different discussion." He would be "very disturbed" if scientists attempted to cross humans with another type of primate, for instance.

But Cook says he is "not totally devastated" by the possibility of cloning a mammoth. "I think it would be quite something.... We cross horses and donkeys and produce a mule," and nobody is upset by that, he points out.

But Cook is unsure if a mammoth could be cloned successfully. "It's hard to know whether they could retrieve viable chromosomes. I think the technology is not impossible.... The species they [mammoths] would be closest to are elephants." But, he adds, "the pregnancy might not go."

The Biotech Age & Our Future

*Counting our 20th century blessings***Harry Boonstra**

The close of a century and of a millennium is a great opportunity for preachers and pundits. What better time to pontificate on history and the human condition than 1999 has been? Among these preachers have been those who discern mostly darkness in the 20th century. These were years of immorality in society, breakdown in family structure and impiety in the church.

In some ways it is impossible to disagree with that judgment. One only has to think of Howard Stern, Bishop Spong, late-night television, abortion and other violence to conjure up the collapse of much of our Christian heritage.

No 'good ol' days'

But I have two difficulties with that Jeremiah-like picture. Too often these modern "prophets" imagine (implicitly or explicitly) a past that was pristine in its teachings and practices. For some, it was the pure, heroic Christian past of American history (I don't think Canadians are as guilty of imagining a golden age); for others the glories of Christian Western civilization.

Secondly, such appraisal and lament does not tell the whole story. I see much in the past century for which I am grateful. Let us therefore now praise the Lord and count our blessings in this century.

From indoor plumbing to psychological cure

An obvious reason for gratitude is the advance in science and technology, from modern sewer systems, to our knowledge of DNA, to my computer on which I "process" these words. Also among these blessings are the tremendous improvements in medical care, including polio vaccine, Prozac, prosthetic limbs, laser surgery, antibiotics and a thousand other advances.

I am grateful for improvements in working conditions. I count labor unions among the blessings. I know: many unions are corrupt and easily resort to violence. But until this century the power and control of employer, boss, or company was virtually complete. The worst example of such capitalistic power was the (ab)use of children as workers; children age 10 (and younger) were forced to work 10 hours a day in coal mines under horrendous conditions. The sweatshops in big cities were often labor cesspools for women and children. And it often was the union that fought for fair wages, the end to child labor, and to curb dangerous



Some preachers and pundits have taken a dismal view of the 20th century, as if our civilization were like the Tower of Babel (above).

working conditions.

I am grateful for the care for the mentally ill. In the 19th century it was common for people to go to the "loony house" where the mentally ill were warehoused. The visitors would find great amusement in the bizarre and violent behavior of the patients; if they were too quiet, the visitors would prod them into more strange antics. The strides made in the care of those with psychotic behavior is a gift of this century.

Women finally take their rightful place

I am grateful for the advances made by and for women. Before this century, women were not allowed to own property, to vote, or to serve on federal juries. They were barred from most professions, and as late as 1920 a third of all American medical schools excluded female students. In the church the estimation of women generally mirrored that of its culture. In the third century, Church Father Tertian wrote, "Women are the Devil's gateway; you destroyed so easily God's image,

man." In the 16th century Scottish Reformer John Knox pontificated, "Nature, I say, doth paint women to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish, and experience hath declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruel and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment." For a long time church authorities did not advance much beyond Knox, and until fairly recently women were allowed no leadership roles in the church.

Even though women are frequently still relegated to kitchen and nursery duties, I am grateful that in many congregations in many denominations women now have significant leadership positions. And the experience in my own particular congregation has been that the complementary pastoral work of women and men as elders has been a great gift.

I am still too old-fashioned to expose my body to a woman doctor (even though women had to expose themselves to men doctors for centuries), but I am thankful for women in the medical profession, law, business, carpentry, university presidencies, space travel, and

most other occupations and professions.

Because "hate crimes" are alive and well across the globe it is difficult to speak of improvements in race relations. But one only has to read cursorily in the history of slavery to realize that this century has seen progress. The horrors of slavery in the southern Bible Belt in the U.S. remain as a permanent blot on American history, and one shudders to read that in the late 19th century some white folk would go to the theatre to witness a lynching. And both the U.S. and Canada long treated their natives with contempt.

But how can we not be thankful for civil rights movements, the crumbling of apartheid in South Africa, greater access to education, and courageous minority leaders in many parts of the globe.

Not so vicious as we once were

Even when it comes to faith, where there is, supposedly, the greatest decline, I see much for which I thank the Lord. The ecumenical movement may at times

be reduced to "I believe my way and you believe yours and we're probably both right (or it doesn't make much difference)." I don't want to be a "truth minimalist," but I'll still take our ecumenical age over the vicious intolerance among Methodist, Baptists, Anglicans, Catholics and Reformed of previous generations.

I'll certainly take it over the Thirty-Year's War, when Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists spent a few decades slaughtering each other and ravaging Western Europe (one reason I've never been too impressed when traditionalists extol the great age of Western Christian Culture — all with capital letters).

Yes, there has been much in the 20th that has been abominable. Yes, our age needs repentance. Yes, we must keep working to re-form our culture, churches — and hearts. But I also praise God for the many good gifts of this past century.

Harry Boonstra refers to himself a semi-retired theological librarian. His un-retired self works at Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Biotech Age and our future

SAVING YOUR MIND: Durable storage media and the Self

Charles C. Adams

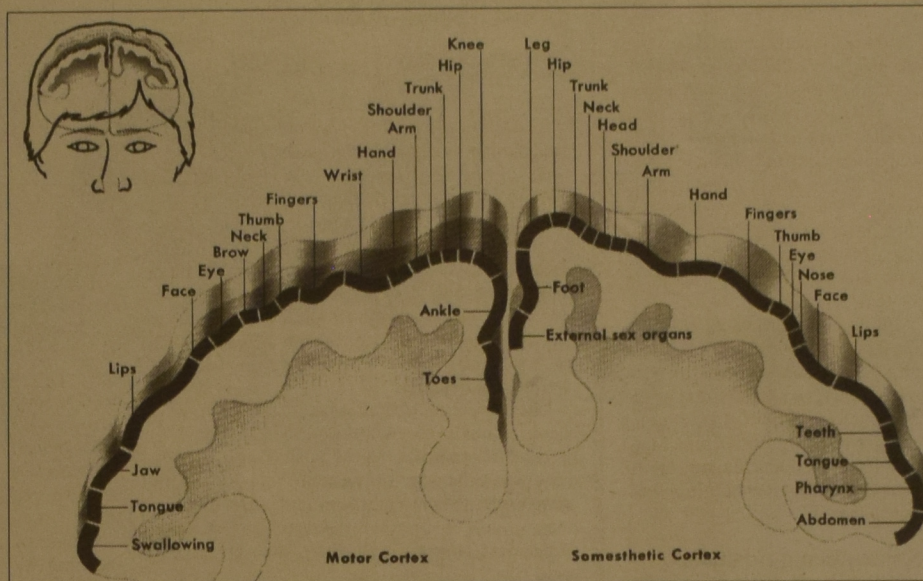
Almost 30 years ago, I stood before my first class of students and – with the zeal of a recent convert – tried to get them to wrestle with what I saw as the “reformational” issues of the day. One of those issues involved realizing that many Christians over the centuries have adopted a Platonic attitude regarding the body.

Most evangelicals grow up believing that we human beings are *souls*, imprisoned in bodies until the time of our death. Then, “putting off this earthly dwelling,” our bodies return to the dirt from which they were originally made, and our souls – our essential selves – spend eternity with God in heaven.

In the late '60s I learned that this view is not biblical. I learned that it had origins in pagan Greek thought, that it became an institutionalized part of Christian thinking during the Middle Ages, when Greek philosophy was synthesized with Christian theology; and that it was reinforced by the rationalism of the Enlightenment, when many Christians accepted the notion that our humanity is evidenced exclusively by our ability to reason.

I remember reading with enthusiasm Abraham Kuyper's *Lectures On Calvinism*, particularly the lecture on “Calvinism and Science” in which Kuyper decries the “dualistic conception of regeneration” that neglects “to give due attention to the world of God's creation,” especially the body, because it cares “too exclusively for the soul” (Kuyper, Abraham, 1931. *Lectures on Calvinism*. Eerdmans, p. 118).

Thus, over the last three decades, I've generally thought that I had a pretty good sensitivity to the problem of “soul-body” or “mind-body” dualism, seeing it as a kind of Christian heresy. I've recently learned, however, that I have not been as sensitive as I originally thought. I'm currently reading a book entitled *How We Became Posthuman* by Katherine Hayles. That book is rather ponderous, a work that one could clas-



“Over the last three decades, I've generally thought that I had a pretty good sensitivity to the problem of “soul-body” or “mind-body” dualism, seeing it as a kind of Christian heresy.”

sify as philosophy of technology; it is not written from a specifically Christian perspective. But Hayles is making very clear to me that this problem of “mind-body” dualism is far more complicated and pervasive than I once thought it to be.

Bio-tech and info-tech converge

Most striking are the apparent convergence of biotechnology and information technology, the assumptions about our humanity that are driving that convergence, and the image of our humanity that such convergence places before the eyes of the general population.

Since the late 1940s, researchers in the areas of information theory and cybernetics have been working at developing “artificial intelligence.” For many, the theory has been that one day we will be able to build computers that are as powerful as, or more powerful than, the human brain. The assumption behind that theory is that the human brain is a very complicated computer. And the belief behind that assumption is that all

of reality is made up of the same basic elementary particles, governed by the same natural laws, and can (in theory) be explained by our knowledge of those particles and laws.

This belief, or faith – for that is what it truly amounts to – is known as *naturalism*. Lately, however, a subtle shift has taken place in naturalism, particularly among those involved in information technology. A new form of naturalism – which Hayles refers to somewhat pejoratively as “posthuman” – gives a privileged place to information patterns as over against the material in which those patterns are manifest.

Thus, reality, including human thought and action, is reduced even further than it is in classical naturalism. It is no longer the lawful behavior of subatomic particles that is allegedly ultimate. Rather, what is ultimate is the information pattern structuring the particles. For human beings, “embodiment in a biological substrate is seen as an accident of history rather than an inevitability of life” (Hayles, p. 2).

Hayles argues that in this posthuman view, consciousness, which in the West has been regarded as the “seat of human identity” since before the Enlightenment, is seen as just another product of evolution, and one that is not even necessarily tied to biological systems.

Revisiting the old heresy

Now, consider that while these developments have been occurring in information technology, a

similar pattern of developments (although starting much earlier) has been occurring in biotechnology. It was perhaps in the Middle Ages when, with the invention of eyeglasses, humankind first realized that it could improve the body. Soon after that, developments in chemistry and biology led to a blossoming in the field of medicine.

A generation ago medical research provided the drugs and procedures for fighting first disease, and then for curing some congenital defects. Today, organ transplants are common, and genetic engineering is able to treat our bodies even before we are born.

Taken together, these developments in information technology and biotechnology lead to the conclusion that the human body is simply the “original prosthesis” that we have learned to manipulate. “Extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of the process that began before we were born,” says Hayles (p. 3).

In other words, the recent convergence between information technology and biotechnology has affirmed with a vigor the old Greek belief and Christian heresy that we are essences (or *souls*, if you will) temporarily occupying mortal, flesh-and-blood bodies. Our bodies take on the character of *fashion accessories* (Hayles, p. 5), and temporary ones at that.

It is, thus, easy to become seduced by fantasies of disembodied immortality whereby our minds or souls or essential selves – assumed to be nothing but information

patterns – can be transferred to more durable storage media when our “earthly dwelling” begins to wear out. Perhaps we will inhabit the dynamic RAM memory of a large computer for a while. Or maybe we will be stored in the read-only-memory of a CD or DVD, awaiting the time when we can be downloaded to the hard drive of the newest model robot – one that we have previously selected as we might an automobile from the new-car showroom.

Inherent contradiction

But wait! Do you hear the contradiction in these words about minds and the “storage media” that they might inhabit? Do you see that we cannot talk even about the simplest information patterns without mentioning the media that manifest those patterns? Doesn't that suggest something about the inseparability of the storage medium and information pattern, about the unity of body and soul?

It should. For here we have an example of God's good creation resisting, on the one hand, our attempts to reduce what is irreducible; and foiling, on the other hand, our attempts to deny the unity in creation as we attempt to absolutize those fallible and temporary categories of soul, body, mind and matter.

So as we witness the convergence of information technology and biotechnology, it is all the more important that we Christians have a good understanding of the unity in creation and the problem of soul-body dualism.

Affirmation

Behind the words of Abraham Kuyper and the Reformed thinkers of our day we ought to hear those words of Job when, sitting on his ash heap on the edge of despair, he said: *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another* (Job 19:25).

As I stand before my students these days, I realize that some things do not change very much. Thirty years later I'm still trying to get them to wrestle with the issues of the day. And some of those issues have not disappeared. Like the issue of mind-body dualism, the form has changed along with changes in technology. Those issues still require us to faithfully exercise our Christian worldview.

Dr. Charles C. Adams is a professor of engineering at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

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Agriculture

How safe are genetically modified foods?

Harry der Nederlanden

The biotech company Pioneer recently developed a new variety of soybean that enhanced its value as cattle feed by adding a gene from the Brazil nut. Some people, however, are allergic to Brazil nuts. But it was thought that the allergic reaction would not carry over to, say, soybean oil made from the new variety. Tests conducted by Pioneer, however, showed that the soybean did in fact trigger allergic reactions. The company did the responsible thing, and abandoned development of the new soybean.

This story is cited by defenders of genetic engineering to illustrate the responsibility of multinational corporations. It is, after all, to their advantage to be careful; otherwise, they will not be able to market their products. But the story is also cited by critics to underline the dangers of transferring genes from one species to another. It is not always this easy to determine whether new combinations will trigger allergic reactions.

Although this sort of technology was introduced with much fanfare about feeding the hungry of the world, one of the first genetically modified products to be introduced by Monsanto was a variety of soybean resistant to Roundup, the company's popular weedkiller. Instead of hoeing, farmers can spray weeds with Roundup without hurting the genetically modified crop, so the sales of Roundup rose dramatically after introduction of the Roundup-resistant variety. What motivated this development was less concern for the world's hungry than for the corporate bottom line.

Growing greed

Many fear that corporate greed will cause products to be put into circulation that will damage the environment, create strains of weeds and insects with new immunities, and produce foods that trigger more allergies and cancers. The U.S., the country with perhaps the best consumer protection in place, has three different federal agencies responsible for overseeing the industry in different ways, but they are not integrated. In Europe such testing is even more disorganized.

Because of the symbiosis between government and big business, as well as science, not just in the U.S. but also in Canada and other countries, critics are worried that government agencies are more

concerned about winning a place in the global marketplace than in ensuring public safety. The expertise required to assess these new products are so rarefied that the top scientists are usually in the employ of or funded by the rich multinationals. The government agencies, thus, tend to depend on the expertise of scientists closely affiliated with the industry and deeply invested in its success.

In a speech to the National Press Club delivered this past summer, Dan Glickman, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, stressed the importance of cultivating public confidence in the new technology. "With all that biotechnology has to offer," he said, "it is nothing if it's not accepted."

Strengthen guidelines

Glickman sketched several principles that should govern our approach to biotechnology, among them an arm's-length regulatory process so that citizens do not perceive any collusion between government and big business in pursuit of profits and jobs. He also stressed the need for companies to respect the roles of the regulator, the farmer and the consumer.

"To strengthen biotechnology guidelines to ensure we can stay on top of any unforeseen adverse effects after initial market approval," said Glickman, "I am requesting all developers of biotech products to report any unexpected or potentially adverse effects to the Department of Agriculture immediately upon discovery" (emphasis mine).

Those reading between the lines might conclude that the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture is more concerned about public perception than about ensuring safety. He went on to call for a public education effort to assure consumers that GM foods are safe, and he reminded the media of their responsibility to avoid fanning consumer fear.

Glickman's confidence in the safety of these products, his appeal to voluntary corporate supervision, and his focus on public relations does little to put such fears to rest. Many critics have insisted that such premature confidence is at the heart of the problem. Too little is known about GM foods to gauge their long-term effects on people and on the environment. Charles Margulis of Greenpeace said, "There need to be long-term studies of the environmental and health effects, and there haven't been any."

Aurora borealis in excelsis

It was December 1952, and Julius, a shepherd, was thinking about his work. He felt like he had the loneliest, lowliest job on earth. He had never aspired to it; nor could he escape it.

Back in 1927 Julius had travelled to Canada from his home in Hungary in order to accumulate enough money to return home, marry his sweetheart and buy a small farm. But in 1929 when the economy collapsed, his dream abruptly ended. He was barely able to keep himself alive. He was stranded in Canada.

The only work that Julius could get was herding sheep out on the desert-like prairie of southern Alberta. The loneliness was anguishing at first. The only person he saw most of the year was the camp tender who brought him food, water and fuel once a week. Every two weeks the herder's camp was moved, along with the sheep, to a new grazing area.

Eventually Julius got used to living and working alone. In fact, he now preferred to be alone. Sometimes he talked to his sheepdog, Scottie. Sometimes he talked to himself.

Not that Julius was completely content in his situation. The faithfulness of his best friend, the dog Scottie, was a comfort to him, but it was hardly all he needed. A Bible given to him by his mother when he left Hungary helped with encouraging words. And overall, he knew that God cared for him.

Just the previous summer, a near-disastrous event stood out for Julius as a reminder of God's protection. One afternoon at his campsite, miles away from anyone, he was seized with terrible stomach pains. While doubled over in pain, he heard the sound of a motor. Looking up, he saw a truck passing by on a prairie trail a half-mile away. It was the camp tender's son driving home from a day of fencing. Julius flailed his arms in the air and then fell to the ground. He was picked up by the young man and taken to the hospital for emergency surgery that saved his life.

Haunted by the past

Now it was mid-December. The treeless and flat landscape was even more bleak than usual, covered as it was with a seamless blanket of snow which seemed tucked in all around the horizon.

As the Christmas season approached, thoughts of all that Julius had lost came to haunt him: a life's partner, family, and the traditions of celebration in

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



his native land.

But Julius determined to make the best of what little he did have. He made sure that the batteries for his mantle radio would last long enough to play the special Christmas programs he enjoyed. He counted on the camp tender to bring him some of the few special things that could be found in a small prairie town: mandarin oranges, fruit cake, a gift of a blanket or clothing. Julius also requested something he had enjoyed as a child: European garlic sausage and dark, heavy rye bread.

Christmas Eve arrived. The wood fire in the small cookstove heated a special meal and kept the shepherd's camp warm. Outside it was steel-snapping cold. The sheep huddled together in their circular corral, locked in for the night. Stars twinkled from a moonless sky.

Julius spread his simple fare on a table which pulled out from under his bunk. The radio played Christmas music. As happy as he was with the camp tender's consideration and Scottie's willing sharing of his meal, nagging thoughts of home crept into his mind like clouds over a starlit sky. God seemed as distant as his long-lost fiancée.

A heavenly display

The herder turned to his Bible for comfort. He read the glorious story of the announcement of the arrival of the Savior. The bright light of heaven, bands of angels singing the joyous news of redemption were for the eyes and ears of only a handful of the loneliest, lowliest people on earth—shepherds!

Suddenly static crackled on the radio, drowning out the music and making Scottie jump. Julius ran outside to check the radio antenna on the roof. When he looked up, there, swirling in rainbow hues and filling the heavens was the most amazing display of Northern Lights Julius had ever seen. His spirit soared. The modern-day shepherd stood there, his hands tucked up under his arms to ward off the cold, and listened while the Master of the universe spoke once again.

Vern Gleddie owns and operates a sheep ranch outside Edmonton, Alberta.



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Christmas is coming!

Watch for our special Christmas edition of *Christian Courier*, December 13.

Lust for life, Christian, it's God-given

Jay Reay

I like lust. It's a human sin, a rumbustious, life-enhancing, funny sort of sin. It's not like avarice or envy—mean-spirited sins for the mealy-mouthed. Or like sloth, dull and for the brain-dead.

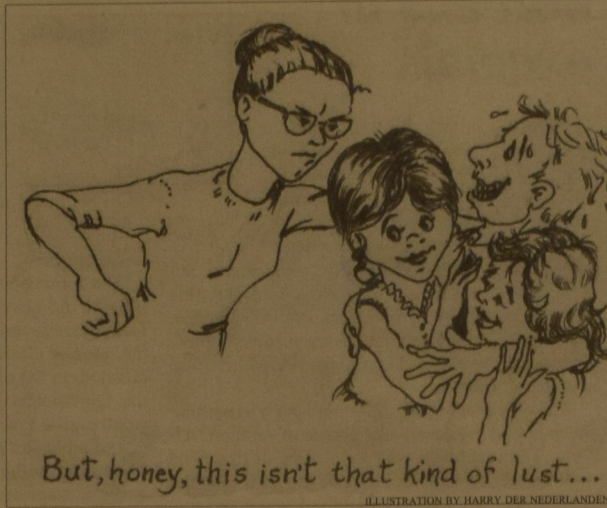
Lust is a Rubinesque sin, a Breughel village scene of life, love, tastes, smells. A mud-on-your-heels, raw steak, bumper of wine kind of sin. A holiday sin.

Yes, I know I am stretching a point to open a semantic discourse. There is a dark side to lust, the overwhelming desire to possess something one shouldn't, to take forbidden pleasures. Sometimes (too often in this world) that becomes a cruel and destructive urge beyond control, and rape and murder follow.

Originally "lust" had none of this darkness; it meant pleasure and healthy appetite. As with many another red-blooded English word, it comes through our Old English (Anglo-Saxon) and Norse antecedents from an Old High German root, all allied to modern Scandinavian and Dutch.

It could also mean "to have a strong liking for someone." The first English-language Bible, translated by Miles Coverdale from Dutch and Latin versions and published in 1535, has: "Yf the lorde haue luste unto us" in Numbers 14:8, a phrase the KJV translates as, "If the Lord delights in us," and the NIV, "If the Lord has pleasure in us."

Without lust in these original,



earthy meanings we would have nothing worth speaking of. Life would be dull.

No calculating

So, I like lust. I like people who are lusty, their vitality, their infectious pleasure in life, their enthusiasm and fervent faith driving them through adversity. Such physical vigor and mental alertness which we have when we're at our best is attractive. It's one of God's gifts, enhancing our presence on earth, and we should enjoy it.

Lust is the opposite of calculation. As we've seen elsewhere in this issue of CC, some couples want to use the benefits of medical science to engineer families.

Children are a gift, the fruit of warm love, of healthy sexual desire. They are not commodities to bolster a couple's public image, selected to match the curtains and enhance the country-club membership application.

People who succumb to this temptation are the obverse of the human coin. They may desire the things of this world, but there's no lust in them.

A trap

Lust is a particularly human failing, arising out of what St. Paul calls our "old" (unregenerate) nature, controlled, more or less, by the spiritual fruits and will, which arise from our "new" nature in

Christ. This failing of the "old man" can be amusing to its spectators. Elderly playboys priapically chasing nubile playgirls round a rabbit-shaped pool are pathetic figures of fun. They bolster the self-esteem of more sensible, cardigan-and-slippers men, they give icy matrons something to tut over.

Lust can affect us at any time and it is highly seductive. It is a trap. We observe it breaking up families we love, and while we feel some compassion for those who let it get the better of them, we want to shake that male friend who leaves his wife for his secretary, when he should just blow a few thousand on a red car with a long hood.

Imitating the pagans

Sinful lust is more than just feeling an untimely surge in creaking loins. Lust as a sin is real wickedness—an overwhelming desire to have something one shouldn't, to steal forbidden fruit, by force if necessary.

The NIV Bible uses the word "lust" itself rarely, substituting "crave" and "passion." But when it does, we are in no doubt that we are being warned off something pretty heavy: "You have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry" (1 Peter 4:3).

God gave us *desire*, without which we would have no motivation to do better, to achieve more, to excel, to care and provide for others, to love someone more than we love ourselves—to serve him.

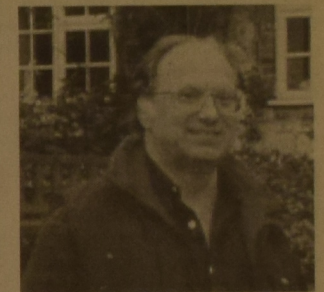
What would we humans be without that lust? It's one of God's gifts, enhancing our presence on earth, and we should enjoy it. As

Andrew Marvell reminds us, and his Coy Mistress, our youthful lust soon enough turns to ashes.

Brought the best bottle

Christ felt pleasure, and validated warm and loving relationships. He brought the best bottle of wine to the wedding at Cana of Galilee. But his words, given through St Paul, leave us in no doubt at all about sinful lust: *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.... The acts of the sinful nature are obvious; sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery.... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:16-23).*

We shouldn't lose good words like lust from our everyday vocabulary. There's been too much of that nonsense recently. "Lust," the immoral coveting after property or power or wealth, a raging desire for the things of the flesh, is destructive. But the impelling power of a lust for life is a vibrant part of being human, a gift from God, and we should bless him for it.



Jay Reay is a knowledge management consultant who is a member of the Church of England. He lives near Oxford.

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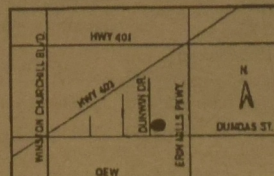
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'Super children' pose ethical problems

... continued from page 14

can take two approaches to addressing this situation, suggests Bouma. One is the political route. The other is a sociological approach which asks: what are the undercurrents in society which lead to this type of marketing of eggs and sperm, and what can Christians do to address those?

One aspect of this is infertility. "Our society puts such a premium on having children, on being a family," he observes. "Is infertility such an awful thing?" Rather than taking a negative view of infertility, churches could affirm single

people, he suggests.

Bouma believes artificial insemination is acceptable, but "only under the most cautious approaches." To deny couples the opportunity of having children this way is "too restrictive," he says. But if couples have children which are not completely their own biologically, "they should realize that will bring specific strains on their marriage," asserts Bouma. For instance, if spouses have a disagreement, one could say, "This child is more mine than yours," or "That's your child, not mine."

Society

Life as they know it:

A snapshot of three Kosovar refugees to Canada

Walfried Goossen

Muhli is a 21-year-old Muslim from Kosovo. He has the equivalent of a Grade 12 education and a couple of years of teacher's college. Until his seasonal job recently ended he had been working as a landscaper. But he is determined to find something else, and to eventually get a BA so he can teach elementary school, as he did in his native Yugoslavia.

He is currently attending an English-As-A-Second-Language course. Sponsored by the Burlington Canadian Reformed Church he has impressed his sponsors with his maturity and sound planning, say his support workers, Trudy Sykes, Anika Kraemer and Linda Achter.

Alone, but not home

Muhli is alone in Canada. He was separated from his family in the turmoil of a refugee camp. He calls them each week, which assuages his loneliness somewhat. But when asked about Kosovo and his family and friends he looks away and speaks softly, with a slight break in his voice and misty eyes. He hopes to get them all to Canada and to make this his permanent home.

Nexhip and Sala, a young cou-



COURTESY WALFRIED GOOSSEN

Martha Neufeld with two Kosovar children.

ple with four young children, and Nexhip's mother live in a four-bedroom apartment in downtown Hamilton, Ontario. In Kosovo they were market gardeners. Accustomed to being close to the soil, the family now gazes down at the city from their 18th floor home.

Their flight from Kosovo brought them to Canada's Camp Borden, where they spent three months before continuing to Hamilton. They were to arrive at the Ramada Inn on July 29 with a large busload of other Kosovars, and to meet their sponsors (Muhli was also one of that group, but seven other members of Nexhip's family

were not). Sala gave birth to a baby girl — a Canadian citizen — that same night. Amazingly, she and the family were sent to Hamilton only two days later, on July 31.

It was one event of many which confirmed that they were in control of little.

The family is being sponsored by Hamilton Menno-

nite Church and is looked after by a 15-member team organized by Martha Neufeld, a nurse and former volunteer with the Mennonite Central Committee.

Sala, especially, has taken the team on a high adventure with her constant headaches, depression and frightening symptoms which have resulted in several rushes to the hospital by ambulance.

At first, Nexhip feared Sala was seriously ill, and worried she was dying. But after nearly daily emergency visits to various clinics and hospitals, and batteries of tests, doctors could find nothing physically wrong with her. It appears

that she was suffering the after-effects of extreme stress.

Small wonder. Sala lost both parents by age two. Her life has always been risk-laden. And barely had she become a refugee in a new country when she gave birth. In the span of a few months, she lost her house (which is still standing), her friends, her country and much of her identity and security.

For refugees who decide to stay in Canada, culture conflicts are a challenge. In Kosovo, extended families share living space, and a husband's mother does most of the cooking. She speaks to family issues through her son. North American women will offer a different picture, as will family life here in general.

One of Sala and Nexhip's children is in school and rapidly learning English; she enjoys school and her new friends. Yet their longing for Kosovo and its familiar faces and places has intensified over the months.

The family hopes to go back to Kosovo in a year. In Canada, language and cultural barriers make everything a chore: taking the bus, learning the banking system, how to shop, and dozens of other things most of us do automatically.

The family has been adequately

provided for by the Canadian government. This includes interpreters for doctors' visits, for example, and a plane ticket home for each if they do decide to return to their native country.

A chimera or 'home, sweet home'?

But will the Kosovo to which they return be as they prefer it to be? Will it be home again, as they hope? They feel everything is fine now that the Serbs have left. But will the aftermath of the war permit them to truly go home again?

Hostilities between Serbs and Kosovars began in 1389 when Serbia lost Kosovo to Albania. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, old hostilities erupted and led to the re-emergence of ancient feuds. Who will throw the next stone in the name of peace and justice? Who will throw the last? Let's hope that many such refugees stay and become Canadian citizens. We need them as much as they need us.

Taking in refugees is not just a work of charity. It is the building of our nation. It is ministering to Christ.

Walfried Goossen is a freelance writer who lives in Dundas, Ontario.

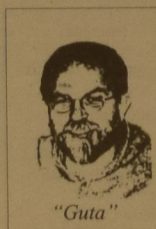
Guilt needs to be faced in Yugoslavia

Alan Doerksen

PANCEVO, Yugoslavia — NATO'S bombing campaign against Yugoslavia ended months ago, but for those living there, reconstruction is a long and painful process. Some months ago, *Christian Courier* presented one man's behind-the-scenes look at the conflict in Yugoslavia, as shared by Dragutin Cvetkovic, a young Serbian Christian living in Pancevo, a city nine km from Belgrade.

Now that Yugoslavia is no longer getting much media coverage, CC asked Cvetkovic (who goes by the pen-name "Guta") how life has changed for him there.

Guta says in an e-mail interview: During the recent war, "my city was bombed the very first night and the very last night, as well as in between. Basically, NATO bombed industry since in my town there is a petrochemical complex with an oil refinery and other factories that make all kinds of dangerous stuff as well as a factory for manufacturing air planes. Most industry is totally destroyed and the environment is very much pol-



"Guta"

luted. There was not much destruction among civilian objects. Some of the industry is rebuilt but only for political reasons, not for the real

purpose of production." Some local bridges and roads have also been repaired.

Guta observes that on the political scene, "Nothing has changed and it seems the same leadership is determined to stay in power forever. All changes they make is to become more and more stronger."

Rather than improving, the political situation "is getting worse and worse with more economical problems, inflation, poverty, and more restricting laws in information, media, university, human rights."

'We are the guilty one'

"I have daily news from Kosovo and we see reversed geno-

cide," reports Guta. "Albanians are committing revenge against Serbs." Christian agencies are continuing to do relief work in Yugoslavia. "They are working very hard," writes Guta, "Particularly an organization Bread of Life."

In his latest e-mail "Sojourner's Diary," Guta writes: "Many people describe life in Serbia like learning to live with cancer. Serbs are aware of a deadly illness through pain and medical predictions of death. However, deep down in their souls some Serbs feel that somehow, someday, somebody will rescue them. They know that in this world after coldness and darkness comes Easter."

He continues: "These days Serbs are asking important questions: 'Who is responsible for today's situation in Serbia?' 'Who is the guilty one?' Traditionally, Serbs are conditioned to blame somebody else for their own predicaments. At this stage many do not blame only West and East, but only our president, Slobodan Milosevic. Without any attempt to diminish his lion's share of the re-

sponsibility, my suggestion is that we have to look much broader at this whole issue.

"Many Serbs are responsible for this situation, including our intellectual elite. We are the guilty one.... Today, majorities of Serbs are pretending like we did not know what has happened during many wars, though we knew it. When Serbs start to look at their own share of responsibilities and guilt it will be a much healthier life in our country."

"Among world powers there is a dilemma regarding how to solve a problem in Yugoslavia. To my understanding, on one side, U.S. politicians are taking a tough position that sanctions should continue so that during [the upcoming] winter, cold, hunger and misery will force [the] majority of Serbs to go out on streets and change the ruling party and our president. Others, mostly Europeans, are taking a position that humanitarian aid, basically in oil and food, should be given to some cities where democratic forces from opposition are in power. It is understandable con-

cern that any help can be misused by Serbian ruling powers. It seems that in both scenarios our president gains and people lose."

Solution: grace

Guta offers this solution to ongoing problems in Yugoslavia: "In both pictures, from Serbian domestic life and internationally, the only avenue that might lead toward a solution is grace. It seems we need grace in order to start to cope with issues of responsibilities and guilt as well as grace as the only way for helping people and equipping them to make changes happen."

Guta received a master's degree in theology from Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1998, and will soon be teaching Hebrew at a Bible school in Belgrade.

He works with Evangelical University Students (EUS), a Christian evangelical organization related to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Guta is a member of First Baptist Church in Belgrade, in which he is an elder and preaches twice a month.

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Anniversary	Birthday	Anniversary
<p>As of May 1999: Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.</p> <p>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, eight business days prior to publication.</p> <p>RATES The cost of advertising space is \$14.00 per column inch (pci) of length. (All columns are 2 inches wide.) This rate applies to all personal and family announcements as well as all other types of advertising, including multi-column display ads. Clients will be invoiced after publication.</p> <p>PHOTOS There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.</p> <p>PERSONAL ADS <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$15 per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> AND to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> #4 - 261 Martindale Road St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 fax: 905-682-8313 email: ccadpromo@aol.com</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Peter and Toos Manni on their 60th wedding anniversary.</i></p>	<p>"Taste and see that the Lord is good, Blessed are they that put their trust in Him." Psalm 34:8 Congratulations to WILHELMINA VANDERGEEST on her 70th birthday, December 11, 1999. Her husband Jan along with their children and grandchildren thank God for her faith and health. We wish her God's abundant blessing. John & Anne Vandergeest — Pembroke, Ont. Sarah, Ruth & Peter Peter Vandergeest & Luin Goldring — Toronto, Ont. Emma Tony Vandergeest & Alice-Ann Tangelder — Kitchener, Ont. Christian, Brendon & Caleb Martin Vandergeest — St. Thomas, Ont. William Vandergeest — Toronto, Ont. Anne & Maurice Veldhuis — Drayton, Ont. Jessica, William, Andrew & Shae-Lynn Correspondence Address: Wilhelmina Vandergeest 106 Fairview Ave, St. Thomas, Ont. N5R 4X6</p>	<p>1959 December 4 1999 To celebrate 40 years of love and many blessings in our family, we wish to announce the wedding anniversary of our Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa, REX AND CAROL HOEKSTRA (nee DEHAAN) We rejoice with them and pray that God will continue to bless them with joy, love, peace and good health. Congratulations and love: Sylvia & Lloyd — Toronto Trudy & Steve — Ottawa Kara, Lindsey Jennifer & Andrew — Sudbury Home address: 1292 Carlyon Line, 212 Second St., RR 4, Orillia, ON L3V 6H2</p>
			Obituary
			<p>"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21). JOHN BUESINK passed away too suddenly on November 9, 1999 in his 55th year. Beloved husband of Lillian Buesink (nee DeJong); Loving father of Cheryl Buesink Lorraine and Ryan Grypstra Jeremy Buesink Joshua Buesink; Son of Johan (deceased) and Aleida Buesink; Brother to Betsy and Warner Boer Simcoe Joanne and Wytse van Dijk — Hamilton Willy and Larry DeKoter — London, ON George and Marilyn Buesink — Strathroy Murray and Denise Buesink — Lethbridge, AB Fred and Marianne Buesink — Burnaby, BC Ena and Bastian DePeuter — Thunder Bay, ON Bernice and Stan Baker — Oshawa, ON; Dear brother-in-law, uncle and friend; Loyal teacher to his students for 32 years at Hamilton District Christian High School. My husband, my friend, my everything. There are no words to describe how much I am going to miss you. Our family would appreciate donations to Hamilton District Christian High School (92 Glancaster Rd., R.R.1, Ancaster, L9G 3K9).</p>
			Obituary
			<p>Gouda Grimsby the Neth. Ont. Oct. 10, 1912 - Nov. 1, 1999 It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father, Opa and great-grandfather CORNELIUS J. (KEES) VAN LEEUWEN Beloved husband of Martha (nee Van Tol) Loved father of: Kees & Bev Van Leeuwen — Grimsby Thea & Durk Buma — Hamilton Anne & Don Whetton — Grimsby Marth & Jim Van Hoffen — Stoney Creek Bill & Patricia Van Leeuwen — Grimsby Father-in-law of Peter & Mika Kamerman. Predeceased by daughter Evelyn Kamerman (1995) and son-in-law John Dekker (1978). Fondly remembered as "Opa" by 27 grandchildren and 17 great-grand-children. Survived by sister Annie Boelhouwer, the Netherlands. Private family graveside service was held at Queen's Lawn Cemetery, Grimsby. A memorial service was held at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church, Grimsby, on Thursday, November 4, 1999. "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31</p>
			Obituary
			<p>"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One." (Rev. 1:17f.) With full trust in her Saviour and longing for the perfect fellowship with God MIRTH VOS passed over peacefully on Sunday, Nov. 14, 1999. She is survived by her husband, Jack, her children: Ethan and Anne — Newmarket ON Rebecca, Matthew and Sarah Derek — Barrie ON Shaun Vos and Lou Lalonde — Hamilton ON Jeremy — Barrie ON her mother, Deane Nederhood, Cutlerville, MI and her siblings: Joel and Mary Lou Nederhood — Lansing, IL Gay VanderZyden — Ashland, OH Joy and Lee Conklin — Columbia, CA Don and Ruth Nederhood — Caledonia, MI Eunice and Jerry Barthel — Lethbridge, AB <i>Life is eternal.</i> Corresponding address: 26 Broadmoor Ave., Barrie, ON, L4N 3M9</p>
			Obituary
			<p>Rotterdam Cobourg the Neth. Ont. On Tuesday, Oct. 26, the Lord called home my dear husband to his eternal rest. JAN (JOHN) EGAS Loving husband of Anneke Egas-Gaastra, Cobourg, Ont. Dear father of Agatha Klooststra-Egas — Cobourg, Ont. Susanna & Jerry Jouwstra — Colborne, Ont. John & Jane Egas — Carrying Place, Ont. Predeceased by his brother, Joe Egas — the Netherlands and son-in-law Mike Klooststra — Cobourg, Ont. He left behind nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. John is survived by his sister, Jane Liefing — Salt Lake City, U.S.A. and brother Piet Egas — the Netherlands. "Blessed is he whose help is in the God of Jacob." (Ps. 146:5) Correspondence address: Anneke Egas, 111 Hibernia St., Apt. 109, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 4J7</p>
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Classifieds

Birth	Teachers	Obituary	Job Opportunities
<p>DEKLERK: Jim and Nelly (Haanstra) thank the Lord for another child that He has given them.</p> <p>KAYLA MADELINE was born on Sunday, Nov 7, 1999 at 6:14 p.m., weighing 7lbs. 4oz. Kayla is welcomed by her brothers and sisters: Chris, Tammy, Lindsey, Allen, Derrick, Robyn and Shawn. She is the 17th grandchild for Ike and Marie DeKlerk and the 43rd grandchild for Joyce Haanstra.</p> <p>Address: R.R.#9 Dunnville, ON N1A 2W8 "I will lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Ps. 121:1-2</p>	<p>TERRACE, B.C.: Teaching position open. Centennial Christian School in Terrace, B.C., invites applications from committed Christian educators to fill two new openings for January 2000 in the following areas: Primary Grade Three Intermediate Grade Four These positions may also involve duties in other areas. Centennial Christian School is an interdenominational school and presently offers Christian education to approximately 225 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. Please send letter of application, resume and other pertinent information to: Centennial Christian School Frank Voogd, Principal 3608 Sparks St., Terrace, B.C. V8G 2V6 Phone: (250) 635-6173 Fax: (250) 635-9385</p>	<p>Andyk Chatham the Neth. Ont. January 12, 1928 - October 7, 1999 "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? He is the stronghold of my life." (Psalm 27) On Thursday, October 7, 1999, our Lord called Home our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, GRACE DE JONGE (SCHENK) in her 72nd year. Beloved wife of Harry De Jonge for 51 years. Lovingly remembered by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild: Liz & John Vannoord — St. Thomas Doug & Julie (Cooper), Scott, Terri Clare & Lou De Jonge — Chatham Ryan, Lindsay, Jeremy Pete and Sher De Jonge — Chatham Lucas, Sybil Harold & Barb De Jonge — Chatham Stephanie, Jillian, Rozlyn, Lisha Ed & Faye De Jonge — Chatham Stephanie, Jaimie, Jessica, Kaitlyn Correspondence address: Harry De Jonge, 322-40 Elm St., Chatham, ON N7M 6A5</p>	<p>CSS STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR <i>Seeking confidential expressions of interest.</i></p> <p>Christian Stewardship Services (CSS) in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church and other potential partners is developing a new stewardship education program for Canadian Churches. As the program components are developed, CSS invites expressions of interest from persons interested in a full-time staff position for this program.</p> <p>The program will require a person with a strong, broad understanding of the Biblical concepts of stewardship, the use of financial resources and giving. The successful applicant will have strong interpersonal, group presentation, and facilitation skills, and good experience and skills in adult education.</p> <p>Familiarity with Christian Stewardship Services, its sponsoring agencies and constituencies will be a definite asset. Salary and benefits commensurate with skills and experience. Initial two-year contract (renewable). The position will require a significant amount of travel across Canada.</p> <p><i>PLEASE SEND A BRIEF RESPONSE, by December 30, 1999, stating your interest and your qualifications to:</i></p> <p>Henry Eygenraam Christian Stewardship Services 315 - 600 Alden Road Markham, Ontario L3R 0E7 Email: admin@cssservices.ca</p>
Obituaries	Obituaries	Miscellaneous	
<p>1909-1999 JOHANNES (JOHN) DE HAAN passed away peacefully at home on Sunday November 14, 1999, in his 91st year, to be with his Lord. Beloved husband of the late Antje (Anna) Koomstra. Dear father of: Bill and Julia de Haan — Kemptville, Ont. Hilda and Bill Vedder — Wainfleet, Ont. Ken and Bep de Haan — Nepean, Ont. Carol and Lewis Triemstra — Kanata, Ont. Ann and Bill Flude — Ottawa, Ont. Lovingly remembered by 17 grandchildren, their spouses and 11 great grandchildren. Pre-deceased by his great-grandson Jason. Dear brother-in-law of Marie Hospes of Heerenveen, the Netherlands. Also survived by nephews and nieces in Canada and the Netherlands. The funeral service was held on November 19, 1999 at Calvin Christian Reformed Church, Nepean. Pastor Ken Gehrels officiated. Burial at Capitol Memorial Garden, Nepean, Ont. Correspondence address: K. de Haan, 41 Howden Ave., Nepean, ON K2G 3H5</p>	<p>Kollummerzwaag (Fr.) Mission the Neth. B.C. June 28, 1929 - Nov. 2, 1999 "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and it is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8) Our heavenly Father took unto himself his child ANDY BEERDA On Nov. 2, 1999, after a courageous battle with cancer. Dearly loved husband of Ann (nee Bronsema) of 41 years. Loving Dad of: Bob — McBride, B.C. Laureen & Tom — Stettler, Alta. Stephen & Doreen — Smithers, B.C. Catherine & Steven — Coquitlam, B.C. Loved Granpa and Pake of 8 grandchildren. Interment took place at Valley View Memorial Gardens, Surrey, B.C. A memorial service was held at the Maple Ridge Christian Reformed Church on Nov. 5, 1999, pastors W. Veenstra and J. Boonstra officiating. Correspondence address: Ann Beerd, #17-9960 Wilson St., Mission, B.C. V4S 1B3</p>	<p>The offices of <i>Christian Courier</i> will close on Christmas Eve — and not reopen until January 4. All advertising for the January 10, 2000, issue must be in our hands by Monday, Dec. 20.</p>	
<p>DAVID (DOUWE) WEIMA At the age of 65, the Lord called him home to join the heavenly choir. Dear husband of Hinke (DeSchiffart) Beloved father and grandfather of: Jeffrey and Bernice Weima Rebekah, David (D), Allison, Naomi, Samuel Gordon and Debbie Weima Katie, Hannah, Emma, Thomas, Rosemary, Ester Peter and Angela Weima Zachary, Samantha Carol and Les Forrest Timothy, Jacob A memorial service was held at the Bethel Christian Reformed Church. Rev. H. Kranenburg officiated. Correspondence address: Mrs. H. Weima 1755 County Rd.2, Mallorytown ON KOE 1R0</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>The Living Word Sermons for reading services. CRC Contact: R. Vander Ploeg Sec/Treas. 37 Brick Pond Lane Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1 Phone: (519) 539-2117</p>	<p>Home Sweet Classifieds!</p> <p>Sing with your grandchildren the old familiar Dutch Christmas carols in this bilingual edition, set to music. \$16.- per copy, 3 copies \$45.- Send cheque to C. Fuykschot, 160 Churchill Drive, Gananoque, ON K7G 1R8. Prompt delivery.</p>	
<p>Home Exchange</p> <p>Couple in Hamilton, Ont., area looking for family in the Netherlands to participate in a house exchange July 2000. Call 905-648-7817.</p>	<p>ADA REALTY LTD. 2011-137 Ave., Suite 404 Edmonton, AB T5A 4W2 780-473-8149 Sid Vandermeulen Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district. <i>Home of confidence</i></p>	<p>NEDERLANDSE KERSTZANGDIENST Emmanuel Reformed Church 170 Clarke Street North Woodstock, Ontario 519-537-6422 Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst met medewerking van het Kerkkoor Zondag, 5 Dec. 1999, 7.30 n.m. VERVERSINGEN NA DE DIENST</p>	<p>DORDT COLLEGE FACULTY AND STAFF POSITIONS Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning August 2000 in the following areas:</p> <p>FACULTY</p> <p>Biology: Emphasis on human anatomy and/or molecular biology Education: Introduction, upper-level, and possibly graduate levels with emphasis on special education Engineering: Mechanical English: Generalist Foreign Language (2 positions): Two Modern Language Spanish Theatre Arts (2 positions): Emphasis on Design and Theatre History Directing and Acting</p> <p>STAFF</p> <p>Technical Director/Auditorium Manager: Stage scenery, lighting, audio; management of auditorium Theatre Arts: Costumer</p> <p>Evaluation of applications will begin December 1 and continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:</p> <p>Dr. Rockne McCarthy Vice President for Academic Affairs Dordt College 498 4th Avenue NE Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697</p> <p>Telephone: 712 722-6333 Facsimile: 712 722-4496 E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff</p> <p><i>Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.</i></p>

Classifieds

Applications Accepted for Two Principal Positions

Abbotsford Christian School, a multi-denominational school system serving over 1100 students at 3 campuses, is inviting applications for an elementary (K-7) principal at the Heritage campus and a high school (8-12) principal at the Secondary campus.

We are looking for experienced and enthusiastic leaders who are deeply committed to Christian education and are excited about working as part of a leadership team.

Application deadline: December 31, 1999

Please direct resumes or inquiries to:

Ed Noot, Principal
Abbotsford Christian School
- Clayburn Hills Campus
3939 Old Clayburn Road,
Abbotsford, BC V3G 1J9
phone: 604-850-2694
fax: 604-850-7075
e-mail: enoot@uniserve.com

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The Halton Region Christian Education Association is seeking a qualified individual to fill the position of principal at its new Christian high school to open in September, 2000. The school will be located in the Halton Region.

Applicants should have an Ontario Teaching Certificate or Letter of Standing, Graduate studies, Principal and/or Supervisory Officer qualifications, as well as administrative experience in a Christian School are desirable. The successful candidate will be expected to provide spiritual, academic and administrative leadership to a growing and developing school community.

The principal will be required to assume some duties associated with the start up of a new school throughout the remainder of the current academic year. Salary is negotiable. Interested persons may forward their resumes, together with a statement of their philosophy of Christian education and references to:

HRCEA
c/o Dr. Gord Bergman, Vice Chair
6551 5th Line, R.R.#4
Milton, ON L9T 2X8

For more information, call 905-878-4754.

Applications will be received until November 30, 1999.

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - Victoria, BC

ADMINISTRATIVE OPENINGS

Pacific Christian School is a well-established, dynamic, inter-denominational Christian School system with 750 students in pre-school through grade 12. The school draws its enrolment from 80 different churches representing 14 different denominations in the greater Victoria area.

A SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL is required to fill a leave of absence for the 2000/2001 school year.

A SECONDARY PRINCIPAL is required for September 2001 to direct and oversee the operation of the high school with a staff of 25 and an enrolment of 330 students in grades 8-12. The secondary principal would join an administrative team that includes the elementary principal and a business manager in providing a viable Christian education for the pre-school through grade 12 system. A successful applicant could serve as Assistant Principal or possibly as Co-Principal for the 2000/2001 school year to allow for a smooth transition.

Candidates must be committed Christians, team players, and be able to articulate a sound vision of Christian education. Candidates are expected to demonstrate spiritual, educational, administrative and financial leadership. Pacific Christian School seeks candidates that have demonstrated successful experience in Christian School leadership and who qualify for a B.C. College of Teachers Professional Certificate.

Enquiries may be directed to John Messelink, Secondary Principal, at 250-479-4532 or Bill Helmus, Elementary Principal, at 250-479-9365. Please submit letter of application, resume and statement of faith by January 15, 2000 to:

Search Committee,
Pacific Christian School,
654 Agnes Street, Victoria, BC V8Z 2E6
fax: 250-479-3511
e-mail: pchs@islandnet.com



Houston Christian Reformed Church
in beautiful northwest British Columbia is seeking a

Full-Time Pastor

to provide sound biblical preaching, ministry to youth and pastoral care. The church membership stands at 67 families, which translates into 169 professing members and 154 non-professing or baptized members. Please send a copy of your profile. A church profile is available upon request. For more information, please contact:

Rick Delau, Search Committee,
Houston Christian Reformed Church
Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0
phone: 250-845-7756 fax: 250-845-7578



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Head Tax Tool Kit. An education and action kit that explains the Right-of-Landing Fee and other barriers refugees face as they settle in Canada. \$15

Wicivetowin: Walking Together. An aboriginal issues study guide for Christians. Study Guide: \$15. Wicivetowin Leader's Resource Binder plus study guide: \$25

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www.web.net/~cpj

The Dec. 13 issue of CC will blanket the CRC community in Canada. If your ad isn't in there, you're missing a priceless opportunity to share your message....



Ancaster Christian Reformed Church is seeking a Full-Time Pastor

to minister primarily in preaching and pastoral care. Church membership stands at 640 members (135 families). Many University and college students (Redeemer, McMaster, Mohawk) join us for our worship services. Other members of the Ministry Team include a full-time Youth Pastor and half-time church Secretary. For more information, please contact:

John Stronks, Chairperson, Search Committee
668 Deervale Road, Ancaster, ON L9G 4E1



De Jong Enterprises Inc. is a family owned, Canadian based, international logistics company. Our group of companies specializes in cross border transportation, customs brokerage and direct marketing services. We are currently accepting applications for the position of:

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Scott De Jong, c/o De Jong Enterprises Inc.
P.O. Box 39, RR3, Norwich, ON N0J 1P0
or faxed to 519-424-2399 or e-mailed to scott@dejong.com
No phone calls please. All applications are appreciated,
but only those applicants granted an interview will be contacted.

Classifieds/Events

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per line inch, per insertion.

Nov. 24-27 "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" by Brecht, Redeemer College Mainstage, **Ancaster**, Ont., Call 905-648-2131 x4211. Recommended for age 14 and up.

Nov. 27 "A Sentimental Christmas", Kathy Troccoli & Orchestra, First Call, Jim Stahl and the New Life Orchestra, hosted by Mark Maseri of 100 Huntley Street, Word of Life Church, 310 Scott St., **St. Catharines**, Ont., 7 p.m. General admission: \$25. Call 905-295-2323 (presented by Heartland Forest).

Dec. 3 Concert in Clinton CRC featuring Jonathan Oldengarm, Organist - 1999 winner of Royal Canadian College of Organist National Competition, Clinton Christian Male Chorus "Men of Note" and Soloist Marieke Streuter. **Clinton**, Ont., 7:30 p.m. Adults: \$8, students \$6, family \$20. Info: 519-482-9543.

Dec. 5 Nederlandse Kerstzangdienst, Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke Street North, **Woodstock**, Ont., 7:30 p.m. (#)

Dec. 6 Christmas Concert by the 120 voices of the Hosanna Choir and the Chimes and Bell Choirs of C.C.S. (Hamilton) at Ancaster CRC (#53 at Fiddlers Green Rd.), **Ancaster**, Ont., at 7:45 p.m. Admission: Freewill donation at the door.

Dec. 10 Christmas Concert with the Redeemer College Concert Choir, Quartets, Duets, Soloists, Brass Quintet & Organ. Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont., 8 p.m. Tickets \$14, \$12 Seniors/students. Call 905-648-2139 x4211 to order. (#)

Dec. 11 Liberation Choir Celebrates Christmas, with conductor Willem Van Suydam, accompanist Lucas Chorosinski, guest soloist Monica Ling Lin. Holland Christian Homes, **Brampton**, Ont., 7:30 p.m. 905-450-3774 (#)

Dec. 11 Christmas Concert by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooy, in the Central United Church, corner of King & Young Streets, **Welland**, Ont., 8 p.m. Adults: \$10, 416-636-9779 (#)

Dec. 14 Christmas Concert by Ontario Christian Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooy, in the Maranatha CRC, Hwy 2 East, **Bowmanville**, Ont., 8 p.m. Adults \$10, students \$6, children under 12 free. 416-636-9779 (#)

Dec. 17 Liberation Choir Celebrates Christmas, with conductor Willem Van Suydam, accompanist Lucas Chorosinski, guest soloist Monica Ling Lin. The Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria, 67 Church St., **St. Catharines**, Ont., 7:30 p.m. 905-934-3600 (#)

Dec. 18 Liberation Choir Celebrates Christmas, with conductor Willem Van Suydam, accompanist Lucas Chorosinski

Christmas Concert Series

by the
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of the

Ontario Christian Music Assembly

under the direction of **Leendert Kooij**

with **Andre Knevel** at the organ

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Children under 12 - FREE)

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Central United
905-735-2333

DECEMBER 14
BOWMANVILLE
Maranatha CRC
905-623-7196

DECEMBER 18
WILLOWDALE
Willowdale United
416-636-9779

Celebrate the Joy of Christmas with us!

The Council and Congregation of the First Christian Reformed Church of Barrie, Ontario,

extend their heartfelt sympathy
to Pastor Jack Vos and his family
in the passing away of his wife,
and their mother and grandmother,

Mirth Vos
on Sunday, November 14, 1999.

We commend them to the care of the Lord.
Romans 8:28

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Classic bulletin bloopers

On a church bulletin during the min-
ister's illness: "God is Good: Dr.
Hargreaves is better."

"The concert held in Fellowship Hall
was a great success. Special thanks
are due to the minister's daughter,
who labored the whole evening at
the piano, which as usual fell upon
her."

"Remember in prayer the many who
are sick of our church and commu-
nity."

"The eighth-graders will be present-
ing Shakespeare's Hamlet in the
church basement on Friday at 7 p.m.
The congregation is invited to attend
this tragedy."

"Low Self-Esteem Support Group
will meet Thursday from 7 to 8:30
p.m. Please use the back door."

"Potluck supper: prayer and medica-
tion to follow."

"Don't let worry kill you off - let the
church help."

"For those of you who have children
and don't know it, we have a nursery
downstairs."

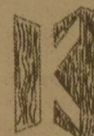
LIBERATION CHOIR Celebrates Christmas

Conductor: Willem van Suydam
Accompanist: Lucas Chorosinski
Guest Soloist: Monica Ling Lin

Saturday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.
Brampton, Ont.
Holland Christian Homes
7900 McLaughlin Road
for tickets call Trudy or Martin Adema
at 905-450-3774
Friday, Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m.
St. Catharines, Ont.
The Cathedral of St. Catherine of
Alexandria, 67 Church St
for tickets call Chuck Dijkstra
at 905-934-3600

Saturday, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m.
Guelph, Ont.
St. George's Anglican Church
99 Woolwich Street
for tickets call Menno Van Harten
at 519-824-1646
or Jayne Van Ankom
at 519-638-2451
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News

AD2000 aims at bring gospel to two billion people

Alan Doerksen

In preparation for the new millennium, an international network of Christian agencies known as AD2000 And Beyond has been working for several years to bring Christianity to more than 1,700 people groups, with a total of more than two billion people, around the world.

AD2000 is a global, informal network of Christian missionary agencies, denominations, churches and individuals committed to making the gospel available to every person by the year 2000 and establishing a church within every unreached people group.

The network first gained attention at the Lausanne II International Missions Conference in Manila, the Philippines, in 1989. From there, the movement grew rapidly. The network asserts that it "brings together the entire spectrum of the contemporary Protestant church, particularly removing the barriers between traditional evangelicals, Pentecostals and Charismatics."

Ralph Winter, founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, calls AD2000 "the largest, most pervasive global evangelical network ever to exist." Patrick Johnstone, author of the book *Operation World*, writes, "I believe that God has given us the best opportunity in all history to gain a wide level of support among Christians committed to world evangelism in the AD2000 vision."

Focus on '10/40 Window'

AD2000 has focused primarily on the "10/40 Window," an area including North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia, such as China and India. This region is where "95 per cent of the world's least-evangelized poor are found," according to AD2000. The net-



The 10/40 window being targetted by AD2000.

work has a prayer initiative called "Praying Through the Window," which has mobilized some 30 million intercessors to pray for the people living in the 10/40 Window.

AD2000 defines itself with three c's: catalyst, co-ordinator and communicator. As a catalyst, the network seeks to bring together churches in the common goals of evangelism and church planting. As a co-ordinator, the network facilitates co-operative mission efforts. As a communicator, AD2000 provides a communications link between Christian leaders in every region of the world.

Led by non-Westerners

Unlike some international Christian groups, AD2000 is led by non-Westerners. Three of its key leaders are: Luis Bush, the international director, from Argentina; Thomas Wang, chairperson, from mainland China; and John Richard, associate international director for special projects, from India.

One thing AD2000 seeks is to avoid duplication of efforts by getting missionaries communicating more with each other. For example, at a meeting in Mali, Africa, set up by AD2000, three Christian agencies discovered they had each been working on the same new Bible translation, unaware of the other groups' efforts. Now, these agencies are working together on

this project.

AD2000 has devised the "Joshua Project 2000," which is a global co-operative strategy that has identified 1,739 people groups (each with more than 10,000 people) most needing a church-plant-

ing effort.

This project is bringing together workers to research these people groups, produce prayer profiles, enlist prayer teams, and mobilize church-planting teams. The 1,739 target groups comprise about 2.2 billion people, most of whom live in the 10/40 Window.

The name "Joshua Project" comes from the Old Testament story of Joshua, who was sent with a team of Israelites to "spy out" the Promised Land. AD2000 sees itself doing a similar kind of reconnaissance of lands in the 10/40 window for the purpose of evangelism.

'Culture of death' is here and now: theologian

Russell D. Moore

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (BP)— Unleashing a list of gloomy cultural trends, R. Albert Mohler told the 28th annual national meeting of Eagle Forum, held September 26 in St. Louis, Missouri, that the North American "culture of death" in this century has brought with it a "death of culture."

Mohler, the conservative president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, warned attendees that the cultural downgrade at the end of the 20th century represents a brutal form of cultural barbarism which can be seen in almost every segment of contemporary society. He counseled attendees to avoid the "persistent temptation" to surrender or retreat from cultural engagement.

'Barbarians' are here

"The barbarians are not at the gate," he said. "They are running the media empires. They are safely ensconced in beautiful high-ceilinged offices in Congress and in the Oval Office. Even though the barbarians and the cultural vulgarians of our time seem to have more influence than the righteous, this is no time to abdicate to the barbarians."

Reflecting on the bloody history of the 20th century, Mohler expressed agreement with Pope John Paul II's assessment that the unwavering assault on innocent human life represents a culture of death. "The culture of death is not something we can speak about merely in the gulag or in the concentration camps or on the battlefields of war," he argued. "It must be recognized that the culture of death has reached even into the

womb...."

"The culture of death is the ultimate degeneration of a culture totally opposed to God and totally opposed to God's authority over life and death," Mohler contended. "And we cannot say that we were not warned."

Conservative activists

This culture of death has led naturally to a death of culture, which celebrates a revolt against authority and a breakdown of societal order, Mohler asserted, pointing to schools which have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge for the "indoctrination of the state," artists who can no longer distinguish between the beautiful and the grotesque, and churches which cower in the face of it all.

Dying culture

"A culture that embraces death at its core, that brings it into its heart, is a culture that is dying," he said. Nevertheless, Mohler contended, those who resist the culture of death and the death of culture should not grow despondent. He cited the prophet Isaiah's message to Hebrews facing exile to Babylon that their God would strengthen and empower them for the dark days before them.

Eagle Forum, established in 1972 by anti-gay activist Phyllis Schlafly, is considered by many observers to have been a deciding factor in the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in the U.S. Congress in 1980s. The women's group has also worked for the enactment of conservative legislation on social issues.

News Digest

Christmas allowed in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM (Religion Today)— Christians will be allowed to hold Christmas and New Year's celebrations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv hotels. Such celebrations have been forbidden in some hotels because observant Jews believe they have the effect of tainting food prepared according to Jewish law, the Associated Press reports. Tour guides, upset that the rules banning the celebrations would reduce the number of tourists for the turn of the millennium, appealed to Jewish leaders, who agreed that the celebrations could take place under certain conditions. Christians will be allowed to put up trees and sing carols in closed-off areas of the hotels, the Chief Rabbinate ruled.

Ferret wires space centre

COLORADO — Technicians at U.S. Space Command used a pet ferret to install wires at the Y2K Center where a joint American-Russian team of missile watchers will help ensure the world's safety on New Year's Eve. The connections, through 12-metre-long pipes that already contained wires, would have cost technicians days of painstaking labor.

Lieutenant-Colonel Randy Blaisdell, who owns Misty the ferret, recalled that ferrets were used during the Second World War to wire airplanes. He tied yarn (which was attached to wires) to his pet's body, and let her crawl several times through the conduits. The job was done in an hour, reports Knight-Ridder News.

A political cat fight

LONDON (Reuters) — A four-year-old ginger tomcat named Cat Mandu assumed joint leadership of Britain's Monster Raving Loony Party recently. Cat Mandu and his owner, Howling Laud Hope, each pooled 125 votes in the contest to choose a successor for the political party's eccentric founder, Screaming Lord Sutch, who died in June.

"As party chairman, I had the casting vote. I didn't have the heart to vote for myself against my cat, so I put a proposal on the floor that ... the party should have joint leadership," explained Hope. "They accepted it." The party claims 17,000 supporters in Britain.

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